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THE CHANGEABLE PROFESSOR

BY

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I.

ON the fourteenth of last April Sir Erasmus Blomfield was sitting in his consulting-room in Harley Street with an air of gravity on his round red face which would have appeared strange indeed to his many acquaintances who knew him only as a genial diner-out teeming with cheerful anecdote; but already that morning he had pronounced two sentences of death. Something had checked the steady flow of the stream of his patients who were wont to come, in the strict order of their appointments, from the waiting-room; and the finger-nails of his right hand were tapping an impatient tattoo on the table. He raised his eyebrows when the decorous Parkins, who ushered his patients in to him, entered the room alone, bearing a card.

"The Professor has n't an appointment, Sir Erasmus, but I thought I had better bring you his card at once," said Parkins, in the deep, deferential tones which had soothed so many impatient patients.

Sir Erasmus took the card; and as he scanned it his eyebrows sank to their natural level. On it he read:

PROFESSOR HEINRICH KRAIN

19 Burnham Square

"Yes; quite right. Show him in," said Sir Erasmus.

Parkins went quickly, and, returning quickly, ushered in a very thin man of rather more than middle height, about forty-five years old. His face, with its admirable brow and well-shaped, arched nose, was arresting. But his black eyes were dull with the dulness which comes of persistent mental work, pursued without rest, recreation, or exercise. An unkempt, black beard half hid his mouth and hid his chin, and, like his long, unkempt, black hair, it was streaked with gray. His cheeks were hollow; and his half-hidden lips were of so pale a pink as to seem bloodless. He wore a black frock-coat, rather shabby, a black waistcoat, and black trousers. Even his watch-guard was a strip of black ribbon.

As he came into the room a racking fit of coughing shook him, and for a moment he leaned feebly against the door-post.

Sir Erasmus rose quickly, his eyes starting out of his round red face with shocked dismay, and cried sharply, "Good heavens, Krain! What on earth have you been doing with yourself?"

"My lungs—I've come to consult you," gasped the Professor.

Sir Erasmus wasted no time. He helped the Professor across the room into a chair, and made his examination. As he set the stethoscope down on the table his face was gloomier than ever.

"You ought to have come to me six—eight—months ago," he said in a bitterly reproachful tone.

"I know—I know. But I've been so busy—the Institute, and my book on the variations of Mendel's Law. Is there—is there nothing to be done?" asked the Professor.

Sir Erasmus shook his head, and said, "You've let it go too far, I fear."

The Professor gasped a short, wheezy gasp; then he seemed to pull himself together, shaking himself with a very feeble shake, and said, "Well, how long have I got?"

Sir Erasmus sat down in his chair and tapped the table with the nail of his middle finger. "Three weeks to a month if you stay in England. But if you start for Egypt within three days, you might make it seven or eight weeks," he said.

"It is n't worth the trouble of the journey," said the Professor. Then he smiled faintly and added, "You have relieved my mind. I had a fright last night—a bad fright: a hemorrhage there seemed no stopping. I was afraid I should not have time to finish my book. It will take me ten days. Three weeks is plenty. Well, well, there's no need for me to take up any more of your time. More hopeful cases need it. I'm much obliged to you for seeing me at once and not beating about the bush."

"One moment. I'll just write you a prescription which will ease your cough a little. And you had better have a good strong tonic too. You'll want it if you're going on working."

"Oh, I must. I must," said the Professor.

Sir Erasmus wrote out the two prescriptions; then he gave the Professor an arm to the door of the house, helped him down the steps, and into the taxicab waiting for him.

He stared gloomily at its swiftly receding back till it was out of sight. Then he went back to his consulting-room and sat down, frowning. Then he muttered:

"Confound these geniuses! Confound them! Overwork—mere overwork and nothing else!"

He rang the bell for the next patient.

II.

WHEN three weeks had passed, Sir Erasmus Blomfield never looked through his *Times* without expecting to light on an obituary notice of Professor Krain; and that with a sinking heart. For all his German name, the Professor was an Englishman, the son of a naturalized German father and an English mother. An amazingly clever boy, unhampered by any devotion to games, at University College School he had swept the board of science scholarships and prizes. Then he had taken a science scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge, and after it every science prize and distinction the University had to offer. He was elected a Fellow of his college, and two years later was appointed to the Chair of Experimental Physiology. In five years he had a European reputation; his book on the physiology of the carnivores had been translated into nine languages; he received degrees, *honoris causâ*, from the chief universities of the world and was elected a member of every important scientific society. Germany made haste to try to annex him as her son; and the Berlin professors never failed to speak or write of him as "our illustrious countryman." Five years later he was appointed to the directorship of the Biological Institute of London, left Cambridge, and settled himself at 19 Burnham Square.

Sir Erasmus had indeed reason to be distressed by the prospect of his death, for not only was the Professor the greatest living English scientist, but in the course of his researches he had made more important contributions to Medicine than any Englishman for sixty years, and Sir Erasmus was looking for more. Besides, he had a strong liking for the Professor, who bore his honors with a singular modesty, and was a simple, cheerful, kindly soul.

The days passed, and no obituary notice caught Sir Erasmus's eye. Then on the 20th of May, after an excellent dinner, he went to an "at home" at Lady Marvin's, in Prince's Gate. In spite of the fashionable quarter in which she lives, the "at homes" of Lady Marvin are remarkable for their freedom from the presence of persons of rank

and fashion. The ill-natured assert that this is owing to the fact that her favorite saying is, "I do hate a fool!" But it is also to some degree owing to the fact that since Sir William Marvin is one of our leading physicists, all the lights of the scientific world flock to his house. Where they gather, other intellectuals gather, so her "at homes" are celebrated not only for the number of distinguished people one meets there, but also for the catholicity of their attainments. She is careful to leaven these gatherings with some pretty girls and cheerful young men, so that every one goes to them, because no one is bored.

Lady Marvin, very roundly and comfortably built, but with very bright, shrewd eyes, welcomed Sir Erasmus as if he were the only man in the world in whom she had ever taken any interest—a habit which invests her with great charm. Then with that knowledge of the tastes of her guests which adds to her success as a hostess, she made haste to introduce him to two young people who were sitting in a corner of the room. Like most men whose occupations are somewhat depressing, Sir Erasmus liked the society of the young.

"Let me introduce you to Miss Rivers," said Lady Martin. "You know her father, Sir John Rivers, who has just built the big bridge over the Irawadi. Mr. George Whitty—Sir Erasmus Blomfield. Mr. Whitty has just won an important patent case for my husband."

Sir Erasmus bowed with a grateful smile, for Miss Rivers was a very pretty girl, uncommonly like a kitten, a resemblance produced by the fact that her face was approaching the triangular in shape and her eyebrows were a little raised at the corners. None the less, set in its frame of soft brown hair, with its clear skin, dancing eyes, and alluring lips, it was a charming face. Sir Erasmus observed that the young man talking to her was her very opposite, with his black hair, black eyes, rugged features, and heavy square jaw.

Miss Rivers smiled at Sir Erasmus, a dazzling smile, and said, "We shall have to talk about something else. Our talk was quite below the level of this intellectual gathering. We were talking about cats and dogs—quarrelling about them—we always do. George—Mr. Whitty—loves dogs; and I adore cats; so we quarrel—naturally."

"Why change the subject?" said Sir Erasmus, sitting down on the other side of her, and thinking that she looked like a kitten, a very delightful kitten, herself. "Cats and dogs are always interesting. What I say is, dogs for the country, cats for the town. It's a shame to coop up a dog in London; but cats, they have the roofs—a splendid expanse of roofs. They use 'em, too—worse luck!—howling and yelling when I want to go to sleep."

Miss Rivers laughed, a delightful rippling laugh. "No, cats for the country, too," she said.

"They use it only for poaching—the brutes!" said George Whitty.

"He's always saying nasty things about them," she said to Sir Erasmus. "He never thinks about mice. Why, if it weren't for cats, we should be overrun with mice—nasty little creepy-crawly things!"

Sir Erasmus opened his polite mouth to declare cats the chief benefactors of the human race, when the deep tones of the butler announcing a guest rang through the drawing-room:

"Professor Heinrich Krain."

Sir Erasmus started, looked at the door, gasped, and nearly fell off his chair.

It would have been impossible to find any one of forty-five looking less like a dying man than Professor Krain. His black eyes, which had been so lack-lustre and dull, were shining brightly; his pale, hollow cheeks were fuller and ruddy; his black hair and beard had grown lustrous and even sleek—plainly they had been lovingly treated by an artist. He looked thicker, considerably thicker, but that might have been owing to the fact that he was wearing evening dress. It was quite new and very well cut. But Sir Erasmus was most surprised by his vigorous air. His legs no longer tottered under his weight; he entered the room lightly. Indeed, it was more than lightly; it was with the swift litheness of a cat. Sir Erasmus rubbed his eyes.

In a dream he saw the Professor shake hands with Lady Marvin, and heard her reproach him for his long absence from her house, and congratulate him on having grown ten years younger.

Then the Professor looked round the room, caught sight of Sir Erasmus, and came to him. As he shook hands with him he said with a gentle, mocking smile, "Not quite the way to be spending my last hours, is it, Blomfield?"

"Th-th-that m-m-medicine I p-p-prescribed is really g-g-good," stammered Sir Erasmus.

"Yes, yes—very soothing," said the Professor. "I took it for twelve days, and it was the greatest help to me. I worked ever so much easier for it, and finished my book in nine days instead of ten."

The beads of sweat shone plain on Sir Erasmus's brow. He found himself on the horns of the dilemma of his life: either he was suffering from a visual and aural hallucination, or he was looking on a miracle—an undoubted miracle. It is hard to say which alternative was the more unpleasant to him. His wits were hopelessly scattered; and he gazed wildly round the room, striving to collect them.

He needed time; and he said hurriedly, in a dying voice, "Here—here—let me introduce Professor Krain to you, Miss Rivers. He's a b-b-b-biologist. He knows all about cats." And he sank back in his chair and wiped his shining brow.

At the word "cats" the Professor drew himself up and seemed to expand. A flame of enthusiasm blazed in his eyes; and he said in deep,

ringing, sonorous tones, which drew the attention of the nearer groups to his words:

"I have lately come to the conclusion that all my life I have underrated the cat. It is the most noble of animals. No one, *no one*, has ever really done justice to its virtues, though I find that a French poet of the name of Baudelaire has shown a considerable understanding and appreciation of it. It's the most noble, the most intelligent, and the most graceful creature in the world. Of course the lion is one of the *Felidae*, and has been acclaimed the representative of all that is noble and majestic in the animal world; but the cat, the domestic cat, surpasses him in everything but size—in beauty, grace, nobility." Under the impression that the Professor was making a humorous speech, somebody in the nearest group tittered. The Professor's face grew challenging, threatening, almost ferocious; and he said:

"I assert that there is no more beautiful, graceful, or intelligent animal than a well-trained domestic cat!"

The guest who had tittered under a misapprehension was hushed and looked sheepish. The other guests were a little astonished at the Professor's vehemence, but they ascribed it to the fact that he had foreign blood in him. Sir Erasmus rose. The Professor's fierceness had not in any way reassured him or helped him to collect his scattered wits. Suddenly the Professor became aware that he had been speaking with an enthusiasm out of place in a drawing-room. He stopped short and with a faint blush sat down beside Miss Rivers.

"Oh, I do agree with you," she said with warm approval.

The Professor gazed at her earnestly and smiled at her with almost caressing eyes.

"Oh, come! What about the dog?" said George Whitty sharply.

The Professor gazed at him across her, his face suddenly fierce again.

"The dog!" he said fiercely. "Of all the animals that evolution has produced, the dog is the vilest! Clumsy! Stupid! Greedy! Aggressive! If I had my way, I'd exterminate the whole tribe." He glared fiercely round the room and added, "The dog-license ought to be raised from seven-and-sixpence to twenty pounds a year."

"That would be jolly hard on people who are fond of dogs," protested George Whitty.

"What do people want with such pestiferous brutes when they can have an affectionate and intelligent cat?" cried the Professor. "If I had my way, there should n't be a dog outside the cages in the Zoölogical Gardens, where it would be possible to study them as safely as we can study lions and tigers."

"You speak as if you were rather afraid of dogs," said Miss Rivers.

The Professor turned his eyes from George Whitty to her pretty face; the sight of it seemed to soften him, and in a gentler voice he said,

"Well, to be quite frank with you, I have an extraordinary and unreasonable dread of a dog sneaking up behind me and springing at my back." They saw him shiver at the thought; and he ground his teeth and added, "If a dog did that, I should do my best to kill it then and there."

George Whitty thought that the Professor must be mad on the subject; but Miss Rivers, disliking dogs, thought his feeling natural, though somewhat violent.

The Professor shook himself, his face cleared, and he said, "But why do I spoil my temper by talking about the brutes? You're fond of cats, Miss Rivers; let's talk about cats. They're much better worth talking about."

They talked about cats and about kittens, their beauty and their virtues. George Whitty now and then contributed a disparaging phrase, which spurred them to finer eulogies. They began to find themselves uncommonly sympathetic. George began to grow annoyed. When they left the subject of cats and began to talk about themselves, he grew uneasy. He had known Kitty Rivers since he was a boy in the fourth form at Westminster School, and she was an engaging and gleeful child of five, whom he had by turns teased and petted. Their intimacy had grown and grown; and in the previous autumn they had drifted into an engagement. They were waiting only till he should have made such a success as would justify their marrying; and by an extraordinary piece of good luck that success had come to him a few days before. The leading counsel in an important patent case of Sir William Marvin had been injured in a taxicab collision on his way to the court, and the conduct of the case had devolved on George Whitty, his junior. He had won it in the most brilliant fashion, with the result that already two important briefs lay in a drawer of the desk in his chambers.

He had come to Lady Marvin's in very good spirits. The course of his true love had always run smooth, and this success seemed to have brought it to a happy end. As Kitty and the Professor talked more and more intimately, George grew more and more uneasy; and when after a while he found that they received his interventions with a touch of impatience, he was filled with a veritable dismay. Indeed, Kitty had become so absorbed in the Professor that she seemed to have neither eyes nor ears for any one else.

George had had enough of it; and in a somewhat severe tone he invited Kitty to come down to the buffet in the dining-room, to eat ices.

Kitty declined somewhat impatiently, for she did not wish her talk with the Professor to be brought to an end. George lost his temper, which was always short, and rose and left them. Lady Marvin, mindful of the service he had rendered her husband, introduced him to several of her most important guests. As he talked to them, he kept an eye on

Kitty and the Professor, and saw that their interest in each other by no means waned. He grew angrier. He had never before had any reason to feel jealous; and he found the first twinges of that passion very unpleasant indeed. But his vanity prevented him from making any more determined attempt to get her away from the man who so interested her. Every now and then he saw a friend go up to the Professor and congratulate him on the improvement in his health. The Professor, in his absorption in Kitty, plainly received their congratulations with ungrateful impatience. George came to the conclusion that he was underbred.

George failed to observe the curious behavior of Sir Erasmus Blomfield, who kept hovering about Kitty and the Professor, staring at them with eyes still full of an incredulous amazement. He talked distractingly to the acquaintances who accosted him; and now and again, with an effort, he tore himself away into one of the other rooms. But always he came back to stare at the Professor, with a look of blank bewilderment on his round red face.

Then Kitty and the Professor rose to go down to the buffet; and George was struck by the fact that they were uncommonly alike in their gait. He had always admired Kitty's light, gliding walk; and he saw that the Professor's was the same. Both of them seemed to him to walk with the smooth, effortless ease of cats. He had often told Kitty that she was exactly like a kitten; now he said to himself, "Hang it all! The fellow's exactly like a cat. Hanged if he is n't as sleek as a cat!"

By the end of the evening George was in a very bad temper indeed; and as he drove part of his way home with Kitty and Sir John Rivers, who lived in Russell Square, he was not soothed by Kitty's manifest inability to talk of anything but the Professor.

At last he came to the end of his endurance, and growled, "The fellow's exactly like a cat!"

"Why, so he is!" cried Kitty, in the tone of one who has received a revelation. Then, after a pause, she added softly, "But how nice!"

For two or three minutes after Kitty had gone, the Professor looked for all the world like a man who has just awakened from a pleasant dream and does not quite know where he is.

Sir Erasmus restored him to the everyday world. "Then you've found it, Krain?" he said in a tone of great excitement.

"Found what?" said the Professor, blinking at him.

"The cure—the cure for tuberculosis!"

The Professor frowned. "I'm experimenting," he said sharply. "I've a lot to learn yet."

"Good! Good!" said Sir Erasmus, rubbing his hands.

The Professor bade him good-night, somewhat curtly; and then went to take his leave of Lady Marvin.

As he shook hands with her he said, "I am so much obliged to you for introducing me to Miss Rivers. She's the nicest kitten I ever remember meeting."

"Kitten?" cried Lady Marvin. "Kitten?"

The Professor blushed faintly and said, "Girl—of course I meant girl. What was I thinking about?" Then he looked her squarely in the eyes and said firmly, "But she is like a kitten—very like a kitten."

III.

ON the first floor of the Professor's house in Burnham Square there had been a front and a back drawing-room running the whole depth of the house, and separated from each other by folding doors. He had taken away the folding doors and turned the two rooms into one long laboratory, replacing the ordinary panes in the lower halves of its long windows with frosted glass, so that not even with field-glasses could the inquisitive from the other side of the square or from the houses at the back see into it. Sometimes for days together no one but himself—no servant, not even one of his learned colleagues—was allowed to enter it.

Naturally, this precaution set flying rumors of horrors of vivisection committed in it. But they remained rumors, for in the matter of vivisection the Professor's reputation at the Biological Institute was above reproach. The students bore emphatic witness that he was most careful to observe the law concerning that method of investigation, that no experiment was ever made upon an unanæsthetized animal, and that whenever it was possible the animal was killed while it was still under the influence of the anæsthetic. His humanitarian enemies suggested that he was too cautious to do anything illegal in his public experiments, but that if he were equally careful to keep the law in his private experiments, he would not have been at the pains to conceal them so carefully.

As a scientific investigator, the Professor had been somewhat unfortunate in his choice of 19 Burnham Square as his abode, for his next-door neighbor, Major-General Perceval Whitty, D.S.O., K.C.G., was one of the most ardent anti-vivisectionists in London. Also, though he had been christened Perceval Whitty, for the greater part of his life he had been known as "Pepper" Whitty. At first he took the Professor's tenancy of number 19 as a deliberate insult; but reason came to his aid before he had resented the affront with the vigor he usually displayed in his resentments. Then he congratulated himself on the fact that the Professor had unwittingly settled down in the very heart of the enemy's country. As a gentleman, General Whitty would never have dreamed of spying on a neighbor; as an anti-vivisectionist, he made no bones whatever about keeping a close watch on a vivisector, regarding him as

beyond the pale of courtesy and humanity alike. The fact that the Professor had changed the glass in the lower halves of the long windows of his laboratory filled him with the greatest suspicion; and that suspicion was strengthened when presently he learned from his man, who had made haste to become friendly with the Professor's pretty parlormaid, that for days together no one but the Professor entered the laboratory.

General Whitty was George's uncle; and it had always been a grievance to him that his nephew had become a barrister instead of a soldier. Against George himself, however, he had no grievance. Indeed, they were on excellent terms, and George dined with him every week. The General had often discussed with him his suspicions of the Professor, and complained bitterly of his failure to verify them.

On the morning after Lady Marvin's "at home" George did not awake in his usual stern eagerness to get with all speed to the work of the day. His jealousy had lost the painful acuteness of the night before, but it had left in him a strange uneasiness. On their way home Kitty had said that the Professor was going to call on her to see her Persian cats; and she had plainly shown herself looking forward to his visit with disquieting eagerness. In court that day George was by no means at his brilliant best; and when the court rose, and he came back to tea in his chambers, he bethought himself of his uncle's hostility to the Professor, and felt that it would be very agreeable to hear that interloper abused. Accordingly, he rang up his uncle on the telephone and inquired if he would be welcome to dinner that night. His uncle replied that he would be delighted to see him, that indeed he had been wanting to discuss a matter of importance with him for days.

When George arrived at 20 Burnham Square, he found his uncle wearing a graver expression than usual. As far as looks went, the General's nickname of "Pepper" seemed to approach the slanderous. He was a quiet-looking, dapper little man, with a small, clipped mustache, not unlike a depressed tooth-brush. His features were small, and Nature did not seem to have taken much trouble about the moulding of them. But his gray eyes were very keen, with a very direct gaze; and the whites of them were as clear as the whites of the eyes of a child.

He greeted George warmly and congratulated him on his success in the Marvin case. They went at once to dinner; and it was not till they had finished their soup that George asked what his uncle had been wanting to discuss with him.

The General's gray eyes sparkled with a sudden bright fire. It was almost as if a sun-ray had suddenly struck steel.

"It's that scoundrel next door!" he cried. "He's taken on a new lease of life. I told you a month ago that the ruffian was at death's door, and I was glad of it. There was nothing personal in my pleasure,

of course. I was just regarding him as a blackguard who was better out of the way. And Martin told me that he was very ill indeed. Martin has got very friendly with the servants next door; and if he had n't known my ways so well, I'd have sacked him for it."

"If that was really the case, the Professor certainly has taken on a new lease of life," said George gloomily. "I met him at Lady Marvin's last night, and I never saw a man looking fitter. He was as sleek as a cat."

"But how has he done it? How has he done it? That's what I want to know," said the General; and he gazed at his nephew with a portentous, darkling air.

"Oh, well, he's a scientific man. Scientific men can do these things," said George. "Is Byngo as friendly with him as ever?"

"Confound that dog!" cried the General. "I should have thought that a dog of his size would have had more sense than to chum up with a confounded vivisector. And the odd thing about it is that that scoundrel is the only stranger I've ever known Byngo to take any notice of, except to growl at. When I saw him dancing round that ruffian and slobbering over him that day, you might have knocked me down with a feather."

"Those big Danes have n't a reputation for friendliness," said George. "How many cats has Byngo killed lately?"

"Not one!" snapped the General. "It grew too expensive. I've paid more than thirty pound compensation for cats that Byngo's killed; and I take jolly good care that he does n't kill any more. I take him on a leash till we get out of the Squares, and only let him run loose in the park."

He paused to drink, with serious appreciation, some of his port wine, which had so often been forbidden him by his doctor. Then he said with an air so grave that it was almost solemn, "If Byngo has n't killed any cats, that scoundrel next door has. It was one of the oddest things I ever saw. I had just come out of the house to go to the Club the other day, when I heard a yell at number 19. Then the front door flew open, and that scoundrel's fat cook bounced out onto the steps; and instantly a barking cat——"

"A Barking cat?" said George. "I did n't know that Barking had a breed of cats."

The General gave him a sharp, suspicious look to see if he were joking. "I did n't say a Barking cat. There are n't any Barking cats. I said the cat was barking—barking like a dog—at least, as near like a dog as a cat could bark. It was a kind of screeching bark. I believe that scoundrel must have tortured it till it went mad and barked like a dog. That's what I believe."

"It sounds rather odd," said George.

"Well, the cat bolted across the road into the Square garden; and there was that big black tom of Mrs. Penderby's. You know—the cat Byngo has tried to kill three times, but it was too sharp for him. Well, the mad cat—it was a little cat, half the size of the other—flew at the black tom and bowled him over. But the point is, it flew at him exactly as a dog flies at a cat. And I'm hanged if it did n't get him by the neck and try to shake him exactly as a dog shakes a rat! But the black tom got away and went for his life, the little cat after him, still barking like a dog. They bolted across the garden and through the rails up Pangbourne Street, into Pangbourne Square, and I saw no more of them. But all the way the mad cat was yelping and barking like a dog. I looked round, and there on the top of the steps of 19 stood that scoundrel, watching the cats. I started to tell him what I thought of him, and I did n't mince matters. No, I did n't. But he began to cough; and presently he was holding on to the railings and coughing his heart out. Well, you can't go on telling a man in that state what you think of him, so I just called him a scoundrel and went off to the Club. But the business gave me quite a shock; and I never played a worse rubber of Bridge in my life than I played that afternoon."

"How long ago was this?" said George.

"Rather more than a fortnight. You did n't dine with me last week, you know."

"Well, the Professor had n't a cough last night, or I should have noticed it," said George. "Now I come to think of it, I never heard him cough once all the evening."

"Cough? He never coughs now! I used to hear him through the wall," snapped the General.

He paused and drank some more port. Then he bent forward with a portentous frown and said solemnly, "I tell you what: that scoundrel has sold his soul to the devil. I don't know how he did it, but that's what he's done. He's sold his soul to the devil!"

IV.

It was Kitty's habit to fall asleep as soon as her head touched the pillow; but on her return from Lady Marvin's, sleep held aloof. She found that she had to lie awake and think about the Professor—his face, his air, his tones, his gestures, the things he had said, and the way he had said them. Never before had a man so impressed her that she had lain awake thinking about him. Why, the night she had become engaged to George she had gone to sleep with her wonted quickness. Had it not been for that engagement, she might have suspected that this might be a case of love at first sight. But her engagement prevented any such suspicion. She lay wondering at the extraordinary

impression the Professor had made on her. Now and then she saw with extraordinary vividness his animated and admiring face. At last she fell asleep and dreamed about him—pleasant dreams.

When she awoke next morning the impression of the Professor's attractiveness was fainter; but she still felt that she had spent a delightful evening, one of the most delightful evenings of her life; and she was grateful to the Professor for having been the source of the pleasure she had enjoyed. He had promised to call on her to see her cats; she hoped he would come soon. It might be that he would come that very afternoon—it would be none too soon. In the middle of the morning, she found that she was looking forward to his coming with greater eagerness than she had ever looked forward to the coming of George; and the discovery took her aback.

In the afternoon, at about the calling hour, she found herself in a curious state of restless expectancy. Four times she went to the window in the hope of seeing the Professor approaching the house. Then, to her great joy, at a few minutes past five a taxicab stopped before the door, and he stepped out of it. She found it hard to bear in mind that she was twenty years old and not dance a short dance expressive of joyous delight.

As the Professor came into the room she observed how little his light, springy gait matched the streaks of gray in his black hair; his was not at all the walk of a middle-aged student. He greeted her with flattering warmth, and his eyes caressed her. He seemed to find some difficulty in letting go of her hand. She was a little fluttered.

Her three Persian cats were in the room. Exceedingly haughty cats, they showed themselves very disdainful of strangers, as a rule. But before she and the Professor had finished their greetings the cats were rubbing against his legs, purring loudly, and standing up and clawing gently at his trousers to invite his attention. It was settled once for all in Kitty's mind that the Professor was the nicest man she had ever met.

He did nothing to weaken the conviction. As they talked over their tea, his eyes were caressing, and the tones of his voice were caressing. He talked to her with an extraordinary display of interest in her. And he talked to her as no other clever man (she had met many) had ever talked to her. He seemed to take it for granted that she was his intellectual equal; and she was inexpressibly flattered by the assumption. The cats set the subject of their talk. They were untiring in demonstrations of their approval of the Professor: one of them took possession of his lap; another settled itself on the arm of his chair, and at intervals rose, put its feet on his shoulders, and rubbed its head against his cheek; and the third sat at his feet, gazing at him, as it seemed, with affectionate respect of a disciple for his teacher. He talked to her about cats as if she had a truly scientific mind. He discussed with her the question

which had been agitating the mind of biologists, whether the primates or the carnivores should be reckoned, after man, the highest creatures in the animal scale; and declared with enthusiasm his conviction that, from the point of view of intelligence, the carnivores were as highly developed as any of the primates.

Kitty was somewhat disappointed to hear that cats were only the intellectual equals of monkeys; and she said sadly, "But you said last night that cats were the *most* intelligent animals."

"Well, the Egyptians, the only race which has ever really recognized the intelligence of the cat, did train it till it became the most intelligent of their animals," he said thoughtfully. "They used cats just as a sportsman nowadays uses dogs. They even trained them to take to water, so that they retrieved the water-fowl they shot, just as a retriever retrieves duck."

Kitty was delighted to hear of this accomplishment; and she accepted eagerly his invitation to take her to the British Museum on the following afternoon, to see the picture of Egyptian cats at their work. He went on to tell her that the ordinary European cat of to-day is probably a descendant of the Kaffre cat of the Egyptians, and that they not only used their cats for sport, but revered them as sacred animals and embalmed them when they died.

He stayed talking with her for rather more than two hours. When they left the subject of cats, their talk never flagged. Only one thing checked for a moment its easy flow. The Professor rose and went to the window to look out into the Square. Kitty's canary hung before the window, high up, out of reach of the cats. When the Professor drew near its cage, it flew from side to side, dashing itself against the bars in an agony of terror. The Professor looked at it distastefully and returned to his chair.

"A curious bird," he said. "I wonder why it's frightened of me. It must be exceptionally timid."

"Perhaps it's your beard," said Kitty.

They bade each other good-by with great reluctance.

There was a little awkwardness at his departure: the cats followed him down the stairs and out of the house. They seemed so resolved to go with him that in the end he had to carry them back into the house himself, and shut them in the dining-room. All three of them were at the window, mewing disconsolately, when he went away.

When he had gone the world seemed to Kitty to have suddenly turned dull. She sat for a long while thinking about him and their talk. She was very pleased that she was going to see him next day. She did indeed find their visit to the British Museum, and their tea at the Carlton after it, very pleasant.

That night George Whitty came to dine with the Riverses in very

good spirits. The uneasiness inspired in him by the Professor's manifest attraction for Kitty had passed away, and it was his intention to get her to fix a day for their wedding. During dinner, however, his spirits were dashed by the discovery that Kitty could hardly talk about anything but the Professor; and he was bitterly annoyed to learn that the Professor had called on her the day before, and that they had spent that very afternoon at the British Museum. George was by no means a good-tempered young man, and, since he felt quite sure of Kitty, he let his annoyance have full expression. He said many disparaging things about the manners and appearance of the Professor, and taunted her with being on such good terms with a cruel vivisectionist. Kitty protested with no little heat that the Professor might be a vivisectionist, but she was sure that he was not cruel. Then George told the story of the mad cat, as he had had it from his uncle. Kitty refused to believe that the Professor had tortured the cat; and she was exceedingly annoyed with George for talking of a friend of hers in such an unkindly fashion.

Sir John Rivers observed George with searching, disapproving eyes. He seemed displeased with his attitude toward Kitty, and was curt with him when the ladies had gone to the drawing-room. George was not at all dismayed, for he felt that he had only asserted himself as a man should. But he was further annoyed later in the evening, when he told Kitty that he was going to spend a week in the country with his mother, and Kitty made no display of regret. Also she did not contrive the usual opportunity for him to kiss her good-night. Nevertheless, he went home feeling strongly that he had asserted himself as a man should. Kitty felt quite as strongly that he had shown himself a very disagreeable young man, indeed, and compared him, to his disadvantage, with the Professor.

She had also a feeling that it was in a way her duty to make up to the Professor for the unkind manner in which George had talked about him to her father's guests. Consequently, she indulged her desire for his society with an easy mind. During the week George was away they went twice again to the British Museum and once to the Natural History Museum in South Kensington, and once the Professor came to Russell Square and spent the afternoon with her. They were coming to know each other very well indeed. He always talked to her as to an equal, about himself, his work, his aspirations, and his ambitions. His confidence in her sympathy was very pleasing to her, after the taciturnity of George on all important matters. George always treated her as if she were a child, unable to understand serious things.

When he came back to London, George, who had been playing golf vigorously every day, had quite forgotten the firm manner in which he had asserted himself; and he was surprised and annoyed that Kitty did not welcome him with the warmth he expected. Then he met the

Professor at dinner at the Riverses', and was yet more bitterly annoyed. He saw quite plainly that Kitty and the Professor were on very familiar, sympathetic terms with each other. Promptly he tried, not without success, to make himself disagreeable. But he was not as successful as he would have liked; indeed, the Professor's attitude towards him was somewhat galling: from the height of his attainments, he treated George with a polite indifference. Sir John Rivers observed George's behavior with considerable disfavor; and after dinner Kitty gave him no chance of talking with her alone. He came away from the house with his dislike of the Professor increased to an aversion. Indeed, it was stronger than an aversion: George felt a basic repulsion from him, the repulsion George felt from cats. With Kitty, he was merely angry.

The next day he made up his mind that her intimacy with the Professor was growing to be a serious matter; and when the court rose he took a taxicab to his uncle's house in Burnham Square, in the hope of learning some more facts to the discredit of the Professor.

He found the General in high spirits; and as he shook hands with him he cried, "I'm thankful to say that Byngo's at last come to his senses about that scoundrel next door. The day before yesterday I was taking him out for a run in the park when we met the ruffian at the corner of the Square. Byngo flew at him. I'd got him on the leash, and he nearly ripped my arm out of the socket. It was a good thing he had his muzzle on, for as it was he nearly knocked the scoundrel down."

"Good!" said George vengefully. "And what did the Professor do?"

"He made one spring to the middle of the road, as quick as a cat. I should never have dreamt that he was so quick on his feet."

V.

DURING the next ten days George found things go from bad to worse. Kitty saw the Professor every other day; and she seemed unable to talk with any interest of anything else. George was beginning to feel a little uncertain of his sovereign sway over her, and grew violently jealous. He was careful, but perhaps foolish, never to miss a chance of abusing the Professor to her.

Kitty was hurt by his abuse of her friend, and talked less about him. But one day in an unguarded moment she quoted something the Professor had said.

"I'm getting sick of the Professor!" cried George violently. "You seem to think and talk of nothing else. I believe you dream of him."

Kitty looked at him in some surprise; then she laughed softly and said, "Why, I believe I do. I dreamt of him last night. I dreamt that

he was a big Persian cat—such a splendid cat—and that I was stroking him.”

“Confound the Professor!” cried George furiously.

Kitty’s eyes flashed. “You’ve no right to speak about a friend of mine like that,” she said hotly. “I’m sure the Professor’s the nicest and most interesting man I ever met.”

“Oh, is he?” growled George, and he ground his teeth.

“Of course I was n’t including you,” said Kitty; but there was no conviction in her tone.

George was at the end of his temper; and he said with even greater violence, “You’re seeing a great deal too much of the Professor. And the way he dangles about after you, when he knows you’re engaged, is infernally bad form. That’s what it is.”

Kitty’s eyes opened very wide, and she laughed a short and rather cheerless laugh. “Why, I believe you’re jealous of the Professor!” she said in a tone of some amazement. “He’s old enough to be my father.”

“He does n’t think so,” said George. “And the sooner you stop gadding about with him the better.”

Kitty’s eyes opened wider and sparkled and flashed.

“But I like him,” she said. “We get on so well together.”

“A great deal too well! And it’s got to stop,” snapped George.

Kitty suddenly cooled, and said coldly, “It is n’t going to stop. The Professor’s a friend of mine; I like him; and I’m going to see as much of him as I like—so there!”

George’s dark face was a very unpleasant purple. He had the strongest desire to shake her; and he felt that in a few seconds that desire would be beyond his control. He snorted and flung out of the room, slamming the door behind him.

He went away furious with Kitty; and he left her furious with him. She felt that he had insulted her. It was some time before her anger waned and she could consider the matter calmly. George had done a very silly and dangerous thing: he had set the Professor before her eyes in a new light. She had been looking on him as a nice middle-aged friend. Considering him from George’s point of view, she perceived that, in spite of the gray in his hair, he was not middle-aged at all. In fact, he was really younger than George.

When he called next day she watched him with new eyes; and the longer she watched him, the more attractive qualities she saw in him. He was undoubtedly handsome in a strong, masculine way. He moved with an ease and a grace she found attractive. She liked his caressing eyes and the caressing tones of his voice when he looked at her and spoke to her. Most of all she like the certainty that if she gave expression to one of her more serious thoughts, it would meet with an immediate, sympathetic response from him.

Her cats seemed fonder of him than ever, and he spent some of the time teaching them tricks. He displayed in the occupation the simple joy of a child playing a new game, and it delighted her.

As he was taking his leave he said, "By the way, would you like to go to the Zoo to-morrow? I'm told that the Society has just acquired an excellent specimen of the *Felix Riverrina*, the fishing-cat of India."

"A fishing-cat? Does it really catch fish?" cried Kitty.

"Yes; it lies in wait in the bushes on the banks of a stream; and when a fish rises at a fly the cat springs and seizes the fish before it has time to dive."

"Oh, I should like to see it!" said Kitty.

"Good! I'll call for you at three to-morrow," said the Professor.

Accordingly, the next afternoon they went to the Zoo, and straight to the cage of the fishing-cat. Kitty did not like it: it had short, coarse fur, and looked very savage. But the Professor seemed quite careless of its fierceness, for he stepped over the barrier, put his finger through the wired bars, and scratched its head. Kitty cried out to him not to be so reckless; but, instead of biting the Professor's finger, the cat rubbed itself, purring, along the bars of the cage. The Professor's cool courage pleased Kitty exceedingly.

Then they went to the house of the lions and the tigers. The Professor complained, with evident sincerity, that the presence of the keeper prevented him from stroking the tigers. Kitty was very glad that the keeper was there: a fishing-cat was one thing, a tiger quite another.

They then went down to the cages of the wolves and foxes.

The Professor sniffed the air and frowned. "What a detestable scent these brutes have!" he said.

"It's not so bad as in the lion house. It's not so strong in the open air," said Kitty.

"But it's so different," said the Professor.

He was walking quickly past the cages, paying little heed to the beasts, when suddenly the yellow Australian dingo sprang from the back of its cage, thrust its muzzle through the bars, and snarled and yelped at him as if the one desire of its heart was to get its teeth into him.

The Professor leaped lightly away from the cage, and stood staring at it, with startled eyes, for five or six seconds. Then, in a sudden bristling fury, he sprang forward and whacked Yellow Dog Dingo on the head with his umbrella. Yellow Dog Dingo leaped back to the safe centre of his cage and snarled at him more savagely than ever.

"Oh, why did you do that?" cried the tender-hearted Kitty. "It could n't get at you."

The Professor walked on a few steps quickly, panting with anger;

then he said, "Well, really, I could n't help it. It was a sudden impulse—irresistible. I should n't have dreamt of doing such a thing a couple of months ago. But of late I have developed a loathing, a—a—horror of dogs. If a dog sneaked up behind me and nipped me, I believe I should scream. I do, really."

His frank confession of the weakness did him no harm in Kitty's eyes.

"I think I understand," she said sympathetically. "I dislike dogs myself; but not so badly as that. I have n't any horror of them."

"Lucky for you—there are so many about," said the Professor, smiling at her.

He was some time recovering from the start the dingo had given him; at least, so it seemed to Kitty. He did not talk about the other animals with the interest he had been showing; and over their tea in the Fellows' pavilion he seemed more thoughtful than his wont. He kept looking at her with meditative, questioning eyes; and he talked about her in an exploring fashion. He seemed to have something on his mind, something that had to do with her; and she wondered what it could be.

She was enlightened suddenly. At his suggestion, they walked home; and in Regent's Park, in an empty path, screened by shrubbery, he put his arm gently round her, drew her to him, and was on the point of kissing her.

"You must n't do that!" she cried, striving to free herself.

"Oh, but I must. It's the only way I can rightly tell you how dear you are to me—how I adore you," he said, gazing down into her eyes with his own all aglow.

"But you must n't! I'm engaged! Engaged to George—Mr. Whitty! Did n't you know?" she cried.

"Engaged!" cried the Professor, in a tone of blank dismay; and he loosed her.

"Oh, this is dreadful! I made sure that you knew!" cried Kitty, wringing her hands at the sight of the dreadful consternation in his face.

"I—I—never dreamt it," said the Professor. "He—he—he's fond of dogs! It's incredible!"

"Yes, yes: I know. But we've known each other years and years," said Kitty.

The Professor pulled himself together and moved on a few steps, rather jerkily. The light had gone out of his face; his eyes were full of trouble; and Kitty believed that his lips were twitching under his mustache.

"I understand—I quite understand. I have been very blind, I fear—yes, and presumptuous. The young to the young," he said sadly.

"Oh, no!" cried Kitty. "But I thought you knew. My ring—my engagement ring—it's—it's on the proper finger!"

"No, I did n't know," said the Professor sadly.

They were silent. Kitty's heart was beating very quickly; her mind was in a whirl. Her chief feeling was sorrow for the Professor. She kept looking pitifully at his downcast, disconsolate face and his brown eyes so full of trouble. But also there was in her an under-feeling of rebellion against the destiny which had linked her to George Whitty.

Presently the Professor frowned; then he looked at her with eyes more troubled, and said, "I'm distressed about this—very much distressed. Not only on my own account—though, I was hoping. But I cannot think that Mr. Whitty is the right man for you."

"But we're engaged," said Kitty miserably.

"It's a pity—though, of course I ought n't to say it," said the Professor.

Kitty said nothing; there was nothing to say. They came to the park gates, and the Professor hailed a taxicab. He put her into it, and bade her good-by. His sorrowful, disconsolate face hurt her.

VI.

KITTY reached home feeling very miserable. She was miserable for the rest of the day, and awoke next morning in very poor spirits. The Professor's unhappy face troubled her. She told herself that she ought not to have let him become so friendly with her, without making sure that he knew that she was engaged to George. But she had been wearing her engagement ring; and it had never occurred to her that he would not know what it meant, that such knowledge did not necessarily come within the province of the biologist. Besides, till George had opened her eyes, she had looked on him as a man old enough to be her father, a middle-aged friend of an uncommonly sympathetic nature. And now her thoughtlessness had made him desperately unhappy.

She was troubled also by his saying that George was not in sympathy with her. She was beginning to perceive that that was the fact. Their engagement had been rather a matter of contiguity than passion. She had drifted into it, almost unknowing. It was beginning to frighten her; her rebellion against it was gathering strength.

Over their tea in the Zoölogical Gardens she had arranged with the Professor that he should come for her early that afternoon, to take her to explore Leadenhall market and the lairs of the cat-fanciers, in search of a tortoise-shell tom. During the morning she was in two minds whether she wished him to come or not; but when the afternoon came she found herself hoping that he would. She was eager to see him; also, she wished to try to comfort him, to banish the unhappiness from his

face. But she did not think that he would come; and he did not. He did not come the next day or the next. She was surprised how greatly she missed him; and it was with a sinking heart that she began to tell herself that he would not come again.

George was a little slow in perceiving the change in her; but presently her restlessness and her unhappiness forced themselves on his attention. He felt her shrink from his kisses, and became aware that she was slipping away from him. He laid the blame on the Professor; and his dislike of him grew to the heartiest detestation.

Sunday morning, after two hours' work, he set out for a brisk walk around Hyde Park before lunching with the Riverses. It was his Sunday habit; it cleared from his brain the week's cobwebs, and helped to keep him fit. He took with him his fox-terrier, Nibbs. He was striding along the northern edge of the park, and had nearly come to the entrance to Kensington Gardens, when he met the Professor. The Professor gave him a cheerful greeting and slackened his steps as if to speak to him. George gave him a little, ungracious nod, and was about to pass him brusquely by, when Nibbs intervened. He sprang at the Professor with a short, joyful yelp and danced round him, barking with enthusiasm and jumping up to lick his hand. George was so taken aback by this behavior that he slackened his pace, and before he could quicken it again the Professor had shaken him warmly by the hand and turned to walk with him.

"This is a jolly little dog of yours," said the Professor, snapping his fingers at Nibbs and patting his head as he jumped. "I must really get a dog. It would be very nice to have one about the house—quite a companion. Sometimes I feel rather lonely at home with no one but myself and the servants."

George was taken aback. "A dog! I thought it was cats you liked!" he cried in the liveliest surprise.

"Cats?" said the Professor, frowning. "Why should I like cats? They're such unsympathetic, cold-blooded creatures. In fact, now I come to think of it, I dislike cats. Yes; I do dislike cats."

George could not believe his ears. He looked at the Professor with eyes full of suspicion. He thought that he was trying to humbug him. After all he had heard from the Professor, and from Kitty too, about his fondness for cats, his words were incredible. Or had he been trying to humbug Kitty by pretending to be fond of cats?

George looked at the Professor with the keen eyes of the expert cross-examiner. Truly, there was no trace of deceit in the Professor's air or expression. As, with limpid eyes, he broke into a panegyric on the dog, its faithfulness, honesty, and courage, he had every appearance of a man revealing his real tastes with a real enthusiasm.

George had never heard words ring truer; and he walked along with

his mouth a little open in his amazement, his eyes glued to the Professor's face. Presently he became aware that the Professor had suffered a change. He had lost his smooth sleekness. His hair and beard were bushier. He had lost, too, his smooth, cat-like gait. His walk was brisk, almost jerky. His eyes were brighter and keener. It suddenly struck George that he looked uncommonly like a Scotch terrier.

It was very odd that this man should always suggest some animal or other to him, and such different animals. Then, suddenly again, he felt attracted to him; he felt that he had become a sympathetic spirit. He joined him in his eulogies on the dog quite heartily. His suspicion had vanished, and with it his detestation.

They walked right round Kensington Gardens along to Hyde Park Corner, talking all the way like old, intimate friends, discovering fresh points of sympathy.

They came out of the park, and George said, "I must take a cab here or I shall be late. I'm lunching with the Riverses." He paused and added, "You know I'm engaged to Miss Rivers."

"Yes," said the Professor. "I congratulate you. Miss Rivers seems to me a charming girl—of her type—of her type."

There was no great heartiness in his tone; he seemed to be making a mental reservation.

"What type?" said George.

The Professor hesitated; then he said, a little reluctantly, "Well, she reminds me of a kitten. She's of that type; and to me personally it does not appeal."

George stared at him. Once more he could not believe his ears. He felt greatly relieved. He had been quite wrong about the Professor: with that feeling about her, he could not have any great influence on Kitty. George begged him to come to tea with him in the Temple any afternoon that he was at leisure, and they could have a talk, dine somewhere, and spend the evening together. He wrung his hand warmly as he bade him good-by.

When George came to the house in Russell Square, he found that his uncle was also lunching with the Riverses. Kitty seemed unhappy; she was rather silent and took but a listless part in their talk. As a rule, she teased his uncle joyfully nearly all the time he was with her. His uncle liked it very much.

As they were finishing their soup, George said, "I met Professor Krain in the park this morning, and we walked round it together."

"That scoundrel!" cried his uncle. "There's something wrong with that ruffian—something very wrong. I told you he'd sold his soul to the devil, and I'm sure of it. Of course you advanced, scientific people will jeer at it. But that's my belief, and I'm not going to change it."

"What's he been doing now?" said Sir John Rivers, smiling at the General's vehemence.

"It's my dog Byngo," said the General. "The other day he flew at the Professor as savagely as ever I saw a dog fly at a man. If he had n't been muzzled, he'd have mauled him badly. I was glad of it; yes, I was glad of it. It's the right thing for a dog to do when he gets at a confounded vivisectionist. And then this morning I was at my bedroom window, shaving, and what do you think I saw?"

He looked round the room as if inviting some one to guess. Nobody tried.

"Well, I saw that scoundrel gathering flowers in his garden; and Byngo was with him—playing about him, licking his hand. I was so surprised that I cut myself—a thing I have n't done for years."

"Well, if Byngo changes about like that, I should say that there was something wrong with Byngo—not with the Professor," said Sir John Rivers.

"There's nothing wrong with Byngo," said the General warmly. "It's the Professor."

"I don't see anything odd in it," said George. "Dogs always know the people who are fond of them."

"But the Professor is n't fond of dogs," said Kitty quickly. "He dislikes them very much; and the horrid things hate him. The Professor likes cats."

"No, dogs don't hate him," said George. "All the way round the park this morning Nibbs was jumping up to lick his hand; and he wanted to go home with him. I had to lift him into the cab."

"And Byngo this morning," said the General.

"And you should have heard the Professor talk about dogs. He said they were the finest of all animals. And as for liking cats, he said that he hated them," said George.

A flat contradiction was on the tip of Kitty's tongue, but considerations of hospitality prevented it from slipping off it. She stared at George and the General in a blank amazement. What did they mean by saying that the Professor liked dogs and hated cats? There came a sudden suspicion that they were in league to depreciate him in her eyes. It was impossible: George would not deliberately deceive her; the General was plainly no plotter. Yet again and again the Professor had told her that he was fond of cats and hated dogs. Moreover, he had again and again shown himself fond of cats. No one could have kept up a pretense so long and so successfully. Besides, why should he pretend? And then, her own cats, they loved him.

Again, there was the episode of the dingo at the Zoo. That dog showed no love for the Professor. She had never seen a dog more savage; and with what fierceness had the Professor hit the snarling brute with

his umbrella! Moreover, there was the Professor's dread of dogs. She was sure that he had been telling the truth when he had told her of his fear lest a dog should sneak up behind him and bite him. Assuredly he had been telling the truth. Why should he not have been telling the truth? She looked at George and his uncle with a fresh suspicion: they *must* be trying to prejudice her against the Professor.

George had been expecting a pleasant Sunday afternoon, spent like so many other pleasant Sunday afternoons, with Kitty alone. He did not get two consecutive minutes alone with her. After lunch, instead of going to the drawing-room, where he would join her, she went with her father and the General into the smoking-room. Then, when the General had gone, she persuaded her father to go with them on their afternoon walk. George was irritated and then angry. He found himself helpless. If Kitty did not make the opportunity, he could not have her to himself. She went to dress for dinner early; and she did not come to the drawing-room till the guests who were dining with them arrived. He left the house that night very angry and disquieted. She was slipping away from him.

The next morning he had recovered somewhat from his anger and disquiet, and came to the conclusion that it would be wise to leave her to herself for a day or two. Her mood might change, and he might find again the old Kitty of whom he had been so sure. He did not go to see her till Wednesday afternoon.

He found her alone, but she showed no pleasure at the sight of him. She shrank away from him when, as was his custom, he bent to kiss her. She was quick to put the tea-table between them. He was nettled; but he kept himself in hand and did not show it. He began to talk to her with an easy air. As he talked, the change in her grew plainer and plainer. She was irresponsive; her interest in him and his doings was manifestly merely polite.

He had been uncommonly proud of himself for his wisdom and restraint in keeping away from her for three whole days, to give her time to recover from her foolish interest in the Professor. When it grew clearer and clearer that he had gained nothing by his abstinence, his anger got the better of him, and he began to reproach her.

In her unhappiness at having rendered the Professor unhappy, and in her distress at his having slipped out of her life, Kitty was very near the end of her temper. Presently they were engaged in as pretty a quarrel as ever parted lovers. The upshot of it was that it would be difficult to say which was the first to release the other from the engagement; and they parted on the worst of terms.

George accepted his release with a grateful warmth which faded in an hour and a half. Kitty found herself free with an amazing sense of relief. But the days passed and the Professor did not come. She

found them very empty days; but she was buoyed up by the hope that when the Professor heard that the engagement had been broken off, he would come. Indeed, she spent no little time trying to find some way of letting him know that it had been broken off.

As a matter of fact, the Professor did know that she was free; for he had come to tea at George's chambers on Friday, and had had the news from him. The Professor consoled with him on the breach in a half-hearted fashion, and went on to suggest that girls of the kitten type always were variable. George quite lost his belief that the Professor was responsible. He became more and more friendly with him; he found him more and more sympathetic; and he became more and more strongly impressed by the fact that the Professor had changed. He had let his hair and his beard grow almost shaggy. George found him more and more like a Scotch terrier.

Then for a few days George saw nothing of him. He took it that the Professor was too busy to go out. Then George came back from the Law Courts one afternoon, to find his uncle awaiting him in his chambers.

From the angry sparkle in the General's eyes, it was clear that trouble was in the wind; and at the sight of George he burst out:

"That scoundrel next door must be stopped! He's grown tired of torturing cats and dogs and rabbits; he's got a panther in his laboratory, and he's taken to torturing that!"

"A panther!" cried George. "No one could vivisect a panther!"

"I tell you he is!" cried the General yet more vehemently. "Last night it woke me up with its roaring. It roared and Byngo howled—you never heard such a noise as they made between them. I stood it as long as I could; and then I went down into the garden with a stick to quiet Byngo. I shouted at the panther. In fact, I yelled at the panther. It was n't the slightest use: it roared louder than ever. Then I went to lick Byngo. I thought he was just howling to keep the panther company. But he was n't. The brute was frightened to death. I've never seen a dog in such a funk. I had to take him up to my bedroom, and then he whined for twenty minutes. I could n't soothe him. And then this morning I saw the panther."

"Did the Professor let you into his laboratory?" said George quickly.

"No; I saw it from my garden. It came to the window."

"Look here, do you mean to tell me that Krain is vivisecting a loose panther?" said George.

"No, I don't suppose he's vivisecting it yet; but he's going to. But the panther is loose. I went out into the garden after breakfast to take a look at the scoundrel's house; I did n't hide, of course—I would n't hide from a scoundrel like that—but I stood among some bushes, screened a little perhaps; and the brute came to the window of the laboratory and looked out over the top of the frosted panes. I just saw its head:

it was a black panther. I thought at first it was a bear; but of course it couldn't have been a bear, from its roaring. It's a black panther. I should have seen more of it, for it stood there looking round the gardens. But at the sight of it I jumped. I'm not a nervous man, as you know; but I dropped my cigar and jumped; and the brute saw me, and snarled, and disappeared."

George stared at him. He was beginning to think that his uncle was losing his wits.

"But look here: those frosted panes run half-way up the window, don't they?" he said. "They must be about four feet high."

"Four feet or four feet six," said the General.

"Well, I've never measured a panther," said George; "but I should think it was three feet high at the most. How the deuce could it look over those frosted panes if they're four feet six high?"

"It must have been standing on a table," said the General.

VII.

THE amazing recovery of Professor Krain weighed on the mind of Sir Erasmus Blomfield. He was of an equable temperament; but he was very impatient for the day when the Professor should give his discovery to the world. Twice he had met him at the meetings of the Biological Society, and with the most diplomatic suavity he had suggested that he should be admitted to his confidence. At their first meeting the Professor had put aside the suggestion with a smooth suavity which matched his own. At their second meeting, on the Saturday before the Professor's walk with George in Hyde Park, he had put aside the suggestion with uncommon brusqueness. Sir Erasmus was disquieted. It was true that the Professor had freely imparted his earlier discoveries to the medical profession; but this was a far more important discovery. He wondered if the Professor intended to keep it to himself and make capital out of it. There was not only a huge fortune in it, but there was power. The man who held these keys of life and death could have thousands cringing at his feet.

It would indeed be quite unlike the Professor to make private capital out of his discovery. But Sir Erasmus was also troubled by the change in his old friend. At the first meeting he had bored several biologists by persistent disquisitions on the virtues of the cat; at the second meeting he had bored them by no less persistent disquisitions on the virtues of the dog. Sir Erasmus had noticed, too, the change in the Professor's appearance and manner: he had lost his sleekness and grown shaggy; he had lost his smooth litheness; his movements were quick and jerky. Sir Erasmus began to wonder whether the greatness of the Professor's discovery was affecting his mind.

Fully alive to his duty to humanity and to Medicine, Sir Erasmus was not deterred by the Professor's brusqueness from his endeavor to induce him to reveal the great secret. He assailed him thrice again, once at the house in Burnham Square, once at his club. Then an event filled him with the firmest resolve to have the secret from the Professor by hook or by crook. The Grand Duke of Lippe-Schweidnitz brought the Grand Duchess to consult him, and he found that both her lungs were so badly affected that there was very little chance that the known methods of combatting the disease would prove of any avail. The cure of a princess of a reigning house would set English Medicine on a height it had never yet attained. Either the Professor must cure her himself, or he must let Sir Erasmus cure her.

Sir Erasmus had not risen to his height in his profession without enjoying, besides his knowledge and skill, a considerable force of character. As soon as he had finished his work for the day, he drove off to the house in Burnham Square, resolved to drag the secret from the Professor.

When the door was opened he stepped briskly into the hall and said to the maid, "I must see your master at once."

The girl jerked nervously aside from the specialist's abrupt entry; and she said quickly, "I'm afraid you can't, sir. Master's ill. Leastways, he has n't been out of his laboratory for the last five days."

"What's the matter with him?" said Sir Erasmus anxiously, in a sudden fear lest the Professor's cure should have proved but temporary.

"We don't know, sir. We have n't seen him, sir. I did ask him to see a doctor—through the door—but he only growled at me savagely. It was dreadful; it nearly gave cook—she was with me—the horrors, though p'raps it was n't the master as growled."

"Not your master? Who was it, then?" said Sir Erasmus.

"We don't know, sir; but it sounded like an animal."

"An animal?" cried Sir Erasmus.

"Yes, sir. Cook and me, we listened at the door; and sometimes we heard the master swearing something dreadful—leastways, that was what it sounded like, though we did n't hear no words—and sometimes we heard the animal growling and roaring. It sounded as if he was having trouble with it."

Sir Erasmus took off his hat and scratched his head—his habit in perplexity. He stared at the maid and saw that she wore a nervous, harassed air. "And you say that this has been going on for five days?" he said in a tone of extreme bewilderment.

"Yes, sir," said the maid.

"But how does he manage about his meals?"

"I take them up and leave them outside the door; and he takes them in. Underdone chops, sir, six at a meal."

"They must be for the animal," said Sir Erasmus.

"Yes, sir. And the master is n't eating anything himself, sir, unless it's chops. Two or three times I've taken up a milk-pudding and vegetables for him; but he never takes them off the tray—only the chops. And he's always so partial to milk-puddings. But yesterday he did take a jar of cream I put on the tray. So I brought him another to-day; and he took that."

"Very odd, very odd," said Sir Erasmus; and he scratched his head again.

"And the animal nearly got out the night before last, sir."

"Did it?" said Sir Erasmus.

"Yes, sir. I put the tray down by the door and knocked and told the master it was his dinner. Then I went down the stairs and waited where I could just see the door through the banisters, over the edge of the landing; and it opened, and the animal put its head out."

"The devil it did!" said Sir Erasmus.

"Yes, sir. And I just screamed and ran downstairs to the kitchen; and we locked ourselves in. We nearly went out of the house then and there—up the area steps. But all our clothes were upstairs; and we did n't like to leave the master alone—he's such a good master, and it's such a good place. And when we got quieter-like and did open the door, there was nothing moving about the house. And cook said that the animal could n't have opened the door of itself; the master must have opened it, and he must have it under control. And he had it under control, for the cook went upstairs and peeped at the master's door; and it was shut, and the animal was growling inside."

"And what was it like?" said Sir Erasmus.

"It was a tiger, sir—a black tiger."

"There are no black tigers," said Sir Erasmus, in a tone meant to be scoffing.

"That's what it was, sir," said the maid, with dignity.

Again Sir Erasmus scratched his head; then he said abruptly, "Well, take me up to your master."

"Very well, sir; but he won't see you," said the maid; and she led the way upstairs.

She stood hesitating a moment before the door of the laboratory, biting her finger; then she knocked gently.

There came a sudden sharp growl from the room. Sir Erasmus jumped and backed toward the top of the staircase, ready to bolt downstairs.

"If you please, sir, it's Sir Erasmus Blomfield, sir. He wants to see you very pertickler," said the girl in a shaky voice.

"Tell him to go to the devil!" said a voice inside the laboratory, a deep, growling voice.

It was the Professor's voice, and yet it was not the Professor's voice. It was not a human voice; it was the growl of an articulate tiger.

The round red face of Sir Erasmus suddenly glistened in the electric light.

"Yes, sir. He's here, sir. Outside the door," said the maid.

Sir Erasmus pulled himself together and stepped forward. "Look here, Krain, I must see you," he said in a trembling voice. "I've got to see you. It's a matter of life or death."

"Well, you can't see me," said the deep, growling voice.

A little sparkle came into the frightened eyes of Sir Erasmus; and in a sudden blustering tone he cried:

"But I must see you! I insist on seeing you! You've got to see me. All this looks very bad—all this mystery—and this animal you've got in there. In fact, I don't believe it's Professor Krain at all. I must insist on seeing that it's all right, or I shall call in the police."

"The devil you will!" said the deep, growling voice; then there was silence.

There came the sound of a slow, padding footfall across the floor of the laboratory. Then, from immediately behind the door, the voice growled:

"Send that girl away."

The maid needed no word from Sir Erasmus; she bolted down the stairs.

"Is she gone?" growled the voice.

"Yes," said Sir Erasmus.

"All right. Come in!" snarled the voice.

The door was opened and Sir Erasmus stepped gingerly into the laboratory, looking round, somewhat fearfully, for the animal. He saw no animal, and turned to the Professor, who stood behind him, closing the door. Then Sir Erasmus nearly fell down. Leaning back against the door, facing him defiantly, stood Heinrich Krain. But not the Heinrich Krain he had known. The Professor's hair bristled on the top of his head; his beard and mustache bristled out from his face. His eyebrows were drawn upward and bristled, too. His nose seemed shrunken and thrust forward along with his jaw, into a kind of muzzle. Sir Erasmus stood gasping, with starting eyes, at a loss to know whether he was staring at a man or a gigantic cat.

"Well, what is it you want?" growled the creature.

Sir Erasmus gasped again and tried to find his voice. He could make no sound. Then, like the bulldog Englishman he was, he pulled himself together and said in a husky whisper, "It's your cure—your cure for consumption. I must have it."

"You must, must you?" growled the creature.

Sir Erasmus's voice came more strongly as he said, "Yes, I must.

It's the case of a grand-duchess—the Grand-Duchess of Lippe-Schweidnitz. Her lungs are too far gone for anything but your cure. And we must cure her—you can see it yourself—a princess of a reigning house!"

The creature snarled, and then growled, "The Grand-Duchess of Lippe-Schweidnitz? Do you think I care a hang for all the grand-duchesses in Europe? Do you know that my father had to fly from Germany and turn himself into an Englishman and spend the rest of his life in exile? A grand-duchess! I should like to get my claws into her!"

He held out both hands with the fingers curved like gripping claws. Sir Erasmus saw a patch of brown, furry down on the backs of them. He had never before noticed any down on the hands of the Professor.

But it was the Professor—the fathers of cats do not fly into exile. Reassured, he said, "Oh, hang it all, Krain! you can't let politics come into a matter of this kind. We've *got* to cure the Grand-Duchess. Look what such a cure means to science—to Medicine. It means thousands and thousands of pounds more devoted to research."

"There is that. Sit down," growled the Professor.

He dropped into an easy-chair; and Sir Erasmus sat down on a chair facing him. For the first time he let his eyes take in something besides the Professor's face, and saw that he was in his shirt and trousers, and that the shirt was open at the neck, showing the same brown, furry down just below the throat. His feet were bare; and there was the same brown down on them, coming nearly to the toes.

Sir Erasmus looked sharply round the laboratory for something that might give him the clue to the secret. He saw nothing but apparatus for biological research. He sniffed uncomfortably, for the air was heavy with a strong musky scent.

The Professor gazed at him steadily; and Sir Erasmus saw that in the bright light the pupils of his eyes were long and very narrow, like the pupils of the eyes of a cat.

"You'll really have to come to our help," said Sir Erasmus. "You know quite well the immense difference such a cure will make to science. Every rich man who makes his will for the next year and a half will leave something towards research. It's your duty either to put me in the way of curing the Duchess, or to cure her yourself."

An expression of horrible ferocity gathered on the Professor's distorted face; but Sir Erasmus was aware that it was only a frown. He was beginning to see more clearly the human being under the mask of a cat.

"Well, you see the cure," growled the Professor.

Sir Erasmus started up and cried, "What? Does it make you like that?"

"More or less," growled the Professor.

"But a grand-duchess!" cried Sir Erasmus. "You—you can't turn a grand-duchess into a—a—a——"

"Oh, say a cat and be done with it!" growled the Professor.

"This puts a very different complexion on the matter," said Sir Erasmus, in a tone of deep disappointment.

"I don't see why," growled the Professor, with a diabolical, cat's grin. "You're not in Germany: they could n't get at you for *lèse-majesté*."

Sir Erasmus shook his head. "It's practically impossible," he said. Then he walked to the end of the table and back again, bending a little forward, his hands behind his back, his brow knitted in a thoughtful frown. He groaned and muttered, "What a devil of a nuisance!" Then his face brightened a little; and he said, "After all, it might be done. If I were to explain carefully to them that it was the only chance, they might see it. But it is such a business to get anything into the thick heads of these royalties."

"You're taking it for granted that I'll cure her," said the Professor. "But I won't. I'm not going to go dead against the course of evolution by preserving the unfit. I'm going to cure only people of some value to the world—people doing good work. It would n't be fair to the world to prolong the lives of the others beyond their natural span."

"Yes, yes, of course," said Sir Erasmus quickly. "But you've got to bear in mind that it's a grand-duchess. You've got to consider the interests of science."

The Professor was silent; but the extraordinary expression of ferocity on his face showed Sir Erasmus that he was in frowning thought; then he said, "There is that. Well, if you can persuade her, let me know."

"Good!" said Sir Erasmus; then he hesitated and added, "Must it be a cat?"

"It might be mice," said the Professor, with the diabolical, cat's grin. "But I don't know how many it would need; and of course the result might be worse."

"Well, I must see if I can get their consent. But you know what women are," said Sir Erasmus gloomily; and he moved towards the door.

"All right," said the Professor, rising and opening it.

As he crossed the threshold Sir Erasmus said, "Transfusion of blood, I suppose?"

"Transfusion of grandmother!" snarled the Professor; and he slammed the door on the specialist's heels.

VIII.

THE Professor turned the key in the lock and walked across the room to a looking-glass which he had brought from his bedroom. He looked at himself with an expression of horrible ferocity. It faded slowly as he became surer than ever that his distorted face was changing slowly back to its proper human shape. He fancied, indeed, that the talk with Sir Erasmus, compelling him to exercise his human faculties, had quickened the change. At any rate, there had been a great improvement since the morning. He turned away from the mirror and made an entry in a thin leather-bound book in which he was keeping the record of the experiment.

Then for a while he moved lightly up and down the room, noiseless on his bare feet. He looked like a great, restless cat. Indeed, an on-looker would have missed the impatiently waving tail. He was indeed restless, and impatient, and angry. He was longing, burning, to be again with Kitty. Now that her engagement to George was broken off, his hopes had sprung to vigorous life. Once he paused before the mirror and cursed aloud the slowness with which he was changing back to human form: it sounded a deep, angry growling. Then he sighed. His sigh was a faint, mewing roar. He began again his impatient prowling up and down the laboratory. Then his restless eye fell on a big book lying on a table in the corner. He picked it up, dropped into a chair, and began to read. It was the second volume of Professor Felbach's monumental work on the Cat.

There came a knock at the door and the jingle of his dinner-tray as the maid set it down against the threshold. He gave her time to go downstairs, and took in the tray. He ate the six chops, underdone, with a greedy gusto which annoyed him. Then he ate the jar of cream with a more delicate greediness. After the meal he went back to his book. At eleven o'clock he set down the book, with reluctance, switched off the electric light, picked up the looking-glass, and went to his bedroom. He did not trouble to switch on the light; he made his toilet in the dark. He even brushed his bristly hair before the mirror, and tried, in vain, to part it down the middle, as was his habit. He seemed to have no need whatever of light; all his movements were quite assured.

When he awoke next morning he threw back the bed-clothes and reached the mirror in a single leap from the bed. He grinned his diabolical, cat's grin at his image: his face had grown yet more human. His eyebrows were coming down to their old position; his nose had plainly lengthened. If he went on changing at this rate, he would be able to go to see Kitty in a few days. He dressed in very good spirits.

He was less impatient during that day. He looked into the mirror many times; the change continued. Once, in the lightness of his heart,

he tried to whistle. It was a dismal failure; he produced a dreadful sound. The next day he saw plainly that his humanity was asserting itself more strongly; and he was changing far more quickly. On the third day much of the bristliness had gone out of his hair; and the brown, furry down on the back of his hands was thinning. He brushed them with a hair-brush, and a lot of it came away. At lunch that day he ate only three chops, and much less greedily. After lunch he bade the maid let him have a milk-pudding with his dinner. His voice was much less of a growl; it was merely deep and hoarse. He ate the milk-pudding with great pleasure. He was more impatient than ever to see Kitty.

In the mean time Kitty had been going about the world in a very listless, spiritless fashion, taking little pleasure in life. Never once did she regret her breach with George, though she felt that she must be a hard-hearted, unnatural girl not to regret it. Her one desire, though she believed she felt others, was to renew her friendship (she called it her friendship) with the Professor. She could find no way of doing it, for though she went with her father to a scientific conversazione, and to three houses at which the scientific gather together, she did not meet him. Then she had a happy idea: she remembered their appointment to go in search of a tortoise-shell tom. She began to search for it alone. She found it a very difficult creature to find; she searched Leadenhall market, the shops of the cat-fanciers, the animal departments of the big stores, in vain. The search improved her spirits and brightened life for her. Then when she had almost given up hope of success, a cat-fancier from the Seven Dials brought a tortoise-shell tom in a basket to the house in Russell Square.

The impatience of the Professor was not in the least assuaged by receiving next morning a note which ran:

DEAR PROFESSOR KRAIN:

I have at last found a tortoise-shell tom. You said you had never seen one, and would very much like to. Will you come and see him on Thursday afternoon? I shall be very pleased if you will.

Yours sincerely,

KITTY RIVERS.

When the Professor had read the note, he danced round his laboratory with all the vigor and more than the lightness of a schoolboy who has received a large donation from home. He kissed the letter with extravagant fervor. Then he dashed to the mirror and examined his face with the liveliest anxiety. It was now Tuesday. Would he be sufficiently human to make a call on Thursday? He decided that he would; and he wrote to Kitty that he would be charmed to come. He did not express any very keen desire to see the tortoise-shell tom. He made it quite clear that it was she he wanted to see.

His letter set Kitty's heart beating very quickly. At lunch her father congratulated her on the improvement in her spirits. She slept much better that night; but that might have been owing to the fact that the Professor's letter was under her pillow.

The Professor spent most of Wednesday before his mirror. He decided that he did look human; fierce perhaps, but human. That night he gladdened the hearts of his faithful servants by taking his dinner in his dining-room. His parlor-maid, however, kept staring at him as if she were not quite sure that it was he. But she was growing used to changes in him. He had to put a strong constraint on himself not to eat his fish greedily. Also, he found that his evening dress had grown rather tight. He had grown stouter; perhaps it was the many underdone chops.

The next morning he was more human still; and his impatience assured him that he was quite human enough to present himself to Kitty. At noon he walked to his hairdresser to have his hair and beard trimmed. On his way he perceived that the people he met regarded him with respectful timidity. It was not unnatural, for he looked like a very fierce foreigner. His hairdresser assured him that he had never had a customer whose hair was so full of electricity; it was like the coat of a cat.

In his impatience, the Professor presented himself at Russell Square at a quarter past three. Kitty was not expecting him till half past four; but she had already put on her prettiest frock, and had had her hair dressed in the most attractive fashion. When the parlor-maid knocked at the bedroom door and told her that the Professor was in the drawing-room, she was barely five minutes making sure that she had done everything in woman's power to look her best.

When she came into the drawing-room the Professor decided on the instant that she was adorable. She was not in the least discomfited by his fierce aspect; she found it manly.

They greeted each other very shyly; and were very ill at ease. But the discussion of the tortoise-shell tom helped them to recover. The Professor with some sadness pointed out that the ingenious cat-fancier of the Seven Dials had deceived her: the cat was not really a tortoise-shell; it was a tortoise-shell and white cat. It's whiteness had been concealed by hair-dyes.

Naturally, the Professor had to console her in her disappointment; and the process of consolation brought them where they wanted to be.

Presently the Professor, with a fierce, subduing eloquence which charmed her, was making it clear that she was the only woman in the world for him, that it was the dearest desire of his heart to make her his wife.

Then he paused and said very gravely, "But there's a secret in my

life which you must know before you give me my answer. It's not a discreditable secret; but it's curious—very curious indeed. To-night I will send you my journal, my scientific journal, for the last two months. To-morrow I will come for your answer."

Kitty was taken aback; but she liked him the better for his honesty.

He was for taking his leave. Her face fell; and she said, "But—th-th-there's no need for you to hurry away like this. We have n't seen each other for such a long time. We could talk about—about other things."

They did not really talk about other things; none the less, they spent a very pleasant afternoon. When at last the Professor left her she felt that, whatever his secret might be, it would make no difference to her.

An hour later she received a thin, square packet from him by special messenger. She opened it and found a leather-bound book. She hurried quickly up to her bedroom with it. It was manuscript in the Professor's neat, clear handwriting.

EXPERIMENT 714

April 24. On the very verge of death, I begin my experiment on the transference of the Principle of Life. Science has demonstrated that the Principle of Life is a force, akin probably to electricity. As we can control and regulate electricity, we should be able to control and regulate it. At present when a human being or an animal dies by a violent death, its unexpended Life-Force is wasted. I have made an apparatus, not unlike a Leyden Jar, in which to catch and confine this unexpended Life-Force, and from which I may be able to convey it whither I wish by insulated wires.

To-day I chloroformed a cat. When it had been dead a quarter of an hour I placed a live cat, along with a sponge soaked in an anæsthetic, in the jar, sealed it hermetically, and connected the insulated wires with the sciatic nerve of the dead cat. Of course its body was physiologically perfect. It needed only the active Principle of Life to make it live and move as it had been living and moving an hour before. Presently, as the cat in the jar sank into the deeper stages of coma, the body of the dead cat began to be agitated by a vibratile movement, which appeared to pervade the whole of it and to radiate from the point at which the wires were inserted under its skin.

As the breathing of the cat in the jar grew fainter, the vibratile movement in the dead cat grew stronger, and presently it drew in its legs and sat up. It seemed feeble and dazed. I was careful to keep the wires in their place. Then, apparently at the very moment at which the cat in the glass jar expired, the other cat stood up, jumped down from the table, and walked to the door, mewing.

April 26. I have repeated the experiment several times, testing the length of time for which an animal can be dead before it is resuscitated. I have discovered that, apparently, the last moment at which an animal

can be resuscitated is coincident with the commencement of the coagulation of its protoplasm. The sooner the Life-Force is poured into it after its death, the quicker is its resuscitation.

April 28. I have repeated the experiment several times more, always with a satisfactory result. To-day I made the further experiment of transferring the Life-Force from a dead to a living animal. I put a dog in the jar and connected the distal ends of the wires with the sciatic nerve of a living cat. As the anæsthetic took effect on the dog, the cat appeared to grow greatly excited. It began to make a curious noise, uttering a kind of screeching bark. It was partly the yowling of a cat, partly the barking of a dog. At the close of the experiment an unfortunate incident occurred. When I loosed the cat, it began to dash about the laboratory with extraordinary vigor, smashing apparatus. I opened the door to get a cloth to catch it with, for I did not wish to be badly scratched. It bolted through the door and downstairs. The cook was in the hall; and I suppose it frightened her, for she opened the front door and it rushed out of the house, still uttering its screeching bark. When I came out on the front door steps, it was chasing another cat across the Square garden. They disappeared up Pangbourne Street. The curious old military man who lives next door was standing on his steps, and at once he began to abuse me furiously. He was exceedingly offensive.

April 29. To-day I have made the final experiment—with success. I have found the method of drawing from the great reservoir of Life-Force which surrounds us, the animal world. I have transferred some of that Life-Force to a human being—to myself. I put a cat in the jar and connected the wires with my own sciatic nerve. As the cat sank into the deeper stages of coma, I began to glow and tingle. It was a very pleasant feeling; I felt extraordinarily exhilarated. Then at the moment at which the cat must have expired, I felt, as it were, a sudden flood of vigor permeate swiftly my whole body. My heart was hammering against my ribs; my face flushed and burned; my temples throbbed. I wanted to dance about the laboratory. In fact, I did dance. I soon quieted down somewhat; but the sense of vigor was very strong. I have not felt so vigorous for years. It was not imagination: I *was* more vigorous. My pulse was quite steady, and stronger than it has been for years; my breathing was easier than it has been for months. It really seems as if my lungs were stronger. Oddly enough, when I took the dead cat out of the glass jar I felt a curious remorse for having killed it. I have not felt it since my earliest experiments more than twenty years ago. It was really very odd. I felt as if I had killed a fellow-creature.

April 30. I am stronger. My pulse has maintained its regular, strong beat. I slept well and coughed very little during the night. I awoke with an appetite and ate a good breakfast. I have not eaten such a breakfast for ten years. In the middle of the morning I went round to Wauchope, the doctor on the other side of the Square, who had been attending me. He seemed puzzled and said that there had been a marked improvement. He advised me to get away at once to Switzerland or Egypt. I suspect that I have no need, that the elixir is in my laboratory. In the afternoon I took a taxicab and drove out to Richmond and round the park. I do not remember such a beautiful spring day since I was at Oxford.

There is no need to transcribe the Professor's journal at length, though Kitty indeed read every word of it greedily. Finding that his health continued to improve, during the beginning of May he transferred to himself the Life-Force of a dog and three days later of another cat. He was noting not only the physiological but the psychological effects of the experiment; and he records that though he chloroformed the dog with satisfaction, since he had developed a new hostility to the whole tribe of dogs, at the end of the experiment he was filled with remorse and felt as if he had destroyed a fellow-creature. He experienced exactly the same change of feeling later when he experimented with the cat.

By the fifteenth of May his lungs were healed; and he found himself more vigorous and in better health than ever he had been in his life. He notes that he began to feel a far keener interest in his fellow-creatures than ever he had felt before, and a desire, quite new to him, to mix with them socially. Also, he discovered in himself a sudden new interest in his personal appearance. He was very particular with his hairdresser, and ordered five suits of clothes from his tailor, seven pairs of boots from his bootmaker.

Then came the record of his meeting, on May 20, with Kitty Rivers. He records at length the favorable impression she made on him, and dwells on the fact that till that meeting he had never been in the least attracted by a woman.

Kitty read this part of his journal with the liveliest interest. There was one passage, almost dithyrambic, which flushed her cheeks and brought tears of delight to her eyes. She failed to perceive how out of place are dithyrambs in a record of a scientific experiment.

But presently the light faded out of her eyes, the flush from her cheeks, when she came to the account of yet another psychological change in the Professor. Two days after he had learned that she was engaged to George Whitty, he had transferred to himself the Life-Force of a dog. He did not dwell at length on the change in his feelings; but he congratulated himself on the improvement in his spirits; and she gathered clearly enough that they had changed, that for the time being he had lost his interest in her. She cried a little.

She went on reading with somewhat less interest, and presently came upon a passage which bore out General Whitty's account of the inconsistency of Byngo. It ran:

Finding that the skin of my leg, at the points at which I had inserted the ends of the wires, was inflamed and burning, and after trying several remedies to no purpose, it occurred to me that a poultice of the bruised leaves of the *Phytoloxera Gratissima* might heal them; and I went out into my garden, in which there are several plants of it,

to gather them. I was greatly startled, and indeed frightened, when General Whitty's savage brute of a Great Dane, which attacked me furiously in the Square a few days ago, jumped on to the wall and sprang down towards me. To my surprise and relief, however, it did not attack me, but displayed the greatest friendliness, whining affectionately, licking my hand, and trying hard to lick my face when I stooped to gather the leaves. I cannot conceive how I ever came to dislike dogs.

Then came the record of the experiment which had transformed him. He had begun a series of tests to determine how much of the Life-Force a man might safely absorb at a time. Since he now detested cats, it was with a certain grim satisfaction that he had put two large and active toms into the jar. They were fighting with considerable fury when the anæsthetic began to take effect. When they expired, the Professor not only found himself changing, but he found himself enduring considerable pain in the process. His description of his pangs and of his horror when he found himself transformed into a gigantic cat was very graphic, and Kitty thrilled with quivering sympathy. She read of his slow return to human form with intense relief; and again she thrilled to read of the return, with tenfold violence, of his passion for her.

She sat for a long while, pondering what she had read. Then she read parts of the journal again, slowly. They were the parts in which the Professor's passion found expression. Most slowly of all she read again the account of his change of feeling after absorbing the Life-Force of the dog. That she pondered very thoughtfully indeed; it grew quite clear to her that the Professor must absorb the Life-Force of no more dogs.

It was but natural that after the despatch of his journal to Kitty the Professor should spend a restless evening. He had, it is true, a good appetite for his dinner, because, nowadays, he always had a good appetite; but after it he could settle to nothing. Soon after ten o'clock, since there was again some irritation at the points where he had inserted the distal ends of the wires under the skin of the leg, he went out into his garden to gather some more leaves of the *Phytoloxera Gratissima*. As he opened the door into the garden, Byngo growled savagely on the other side of the wall. A sudden light sparkled in the Professor's eyes. He went back along the hall and fetched the stout blackthorn which he was wont to carry during his rare, recuperating holidays in the country. He came out into the garden.

At the sound of his footsteps the dog broke into a furious barking. The Professor heard his kennel grate on the ground as it moved to his violent jerks. Suddenly there came the clash of the links of his chain as it snapped to a yet more violent jerk. With a savage growl the dog leaped upon the wall, black against the moon. The Professor did not dash back to the house; he stood lightly poised, gripping the heavy stick.

His hair rose bristling on his head, and a curious tigerish yell burst from between his bared teeth.

The dog saw him, leaped from the wall, and sprang at the Professor's throat. He did not reach it. His spring was swift, but the Professor sprang aside yet more swiftly, and as swiftly struck the long body as it passed him through the air.

The blow sent Byngo sprawling as he came to the ground, with a howl as much of surprise as of pain. As he came to his feet the Professor was upon him and struck again. Byngo howled and sprang once more. Again the Professor jumped, cat-like, aside and struck him. Byngo came down with a howl, jumped away, and circled round the Professor, barking savagely, seeking an opening. The Professor, turning quickly, gave him none. He was dimly aware of the opening of the General's garden door. Then in his turn he made a spring and whacked Byngo hard over his thick head. The dog made another futile spring and received another blow, which rolled him over and over, yelping. The eyes of the General, who was standing on his garden roller, rose above the wall in time to see the Professor whack his pet.

"Byngo! Byngo! Come off, you brute!" roared the General.

Byngo paid no heed to him, but resumed his circling course. But he pursued it with less conviction. The Professor's instinct told him that he was winning. With another tigerish yell he sprang upon the doubtful dog, and struck, and struck, and struck, dodging his jaws. Byngo snapped, and yelped, and turned. The Professor leaped after him and struck and struck. Byngo yelped and yelped to the blows, then leaped for the garden wall. He did not catch it quite fairly; but the Professor's stick helped him scramble over. In an imperative need to bite some one, he bit the General in the leg. The raving warrior kicked him into his kennel.

Then the General again leaped upon his garden roller and told the Professor everything he thought about him, in a high-pitched voice which cracked several times on the upper notes. The Professor paid no heed to him whatever; he was calmly gathering the leaves of the *Phytoloxera Gratissima*.

The next morning the Professor was again nervous, restless, anxious. At about eleven o'clock he could endure the suspense no longer. He resolved to hear the worst, or the best, at once, and betook himself in a taxicab to Russell Square.

As he entered the drawing-room Kitty came forward to greet him with flushed cheeks and shining eyes; she held out both hands to his clasp and said in a melancholy tone, "Oh, Heinrich, is n't it sad to think that you will always have to use those poor cats!"

A FOREMOST AMERICAN LYRIST

AN APPRECIATION

By William Stanley Braithwaite

I N a sonnet called "Poetry," Florence Earle Coates has a line in which she sings:

She has envisaged the veiled heart of things.

This "envisaging" the veiled heart of things is that transubstantiating power in the poet which enables him to evoke those images in which life symbolizes its manifold and myriad significations in the subtle woof that makes the warp of existence coherent and explicable. Life itself is a great mystery, and all the apparent realities in the visible world, however solid or imperative in form and color, are but the embodiment of what is eternally real in the secret and veiled spirit in man and nature. To manifest this eternal reality, to make an understandable language of exteriorities that will express and interpret the meaning and purpose of this vital, unsubstantial reality, is what makes poetry in its functional communication the most profound of the arts, and the poet the noblest benefactor of mankind.

Among contemporary American poets, Mrs. Coates holds a high position for serious and sustained work. In the four published volumes to her credit there is represented a varied and penetrative outlook on life in all its significant aspects which, expressed in the most compelling forms of lyric art, stamp her as the possessor of an extraordinary poetic gift. She has conceived the high function of poetry as an interpretation and criticism of life, adhering to the canons of her beloved master, Matthew Arnold, and has proven her worth, and the right to receive and exercise the spiritual influence inherited from that great and austere poet.

Her art becomes a criticism of life, but it loses nothing because of its seriousness, of those impalpable and exquisite qualities by which poetry itself is a special embodiment and expression of beauty. Because the message underlying the emotion and thought of her verse is the utterance of a soul that sympathizes with, and broods over, the "veiled heart"

of humanity, does not make her less conscious of that supreme beauty of form and language which Truth demands as the garment in which to present its shining purposes and the convincing realization of its secrets. But with all its subtle artistic forms, Mrs. Coates's poetry renders a lucid interpretation of life. Her lyrical work is at once poignant in feeling, melodious in tone, and emphatic in the substantive meaning that lies embedded in the thought or emotion. The purely art lyric is never deliberately shaped by her with that classical detachment practised by the poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; nor yet the over-elaborate decoration of the romanticist modern poet, that gives freedom to ambiguous sentiment rather than to spiritual grace. The chastity of thought and emotion is so deep in her as to create a poetic imagery tintured with subtle and unfading coloring from the mystery of life itself, and consequently her lyrics, both in music and substance, are as pure as crystal. Compelling lyric art must be personal, which does not imply that it must be emotionally subjective. In its significance, as the language of humanity rather than the voice of an individual, its authenticity widens into a sort of testament of the spirit, that all men, not of one particular class or creed, social condition or nationality, accept as the symbol of their aspirations and hopes. Mrs. Coates's lyrics fulfil this personate-universality, they are so distinctively a language, because the voice in which she speaks it is full of the feelings that lie dumb, or are imperfectly expressed, in the heart of the human race. No art could be more one's own than Mrs. Coates's. In this she is not different from many another of the world's accomplished poets. What I mean is, though she sees the world made up of individuals, each with their particular and isolated hopes and aspirations, joys and sorrows, desires and ambitions, these individuals make humanity as a whole, and it is the life of the whole, full of its mysteries, unaccountable promptings and progress, which she sings, bringing it into communion with destiny and fulfilment.

Once we recognize this completeness, this inclusive grasp of humanity, in Mrs. Coates's outlook upon life and the world, we come to realize the significance of that line already quoted, in which poetry is said to "envisage the veiled heart of things," and accept it as the particular function of her own work. Through the four books of her poetry, this steady purpose is seen. It never works in any isolated passion, in any emphasis where the emotion is the outcome of some detached motive of the individual. In all her poems the ideal is rendered articulate through some particular aspiration. Despite all the unhappiness and pain in the world, it is far better than it seems, because there is an ideal existence that man experiences in his nature, and this he strives to realize in his outer acts and relationships. His failure to realize these ideals fully, but which he perpetually acknowledges and sets as the standard of conduct, is what creates those intense aspirations of the soul, out of which are born those

moods and desires, with their pathos and joys, making humanity beautiful. Beneath the complex surface of life is a simple fact that justifies the optimism pervading the most compelling art. In Dante's lines,

*Quanto la cosa è più perfetta,
Più senta il bene, e così la doglienza,*

is declared both the reward and the penalty the human soul must enjoy and pay in its steady progress through the world. And Mrs. Coates in one of her profoundest and most beautiful lyrics, "The Ideal," conveys this same thought, in which there is not the mere personal utterance of a passionate and aspiring soul, but the complex cry of the entire human race:

Something I may not win attracts me ever,—
Something elusive, yet supremely fair,
Thrills me with gladness, but contents me never,
Fills me with sadness, yet forbids despair.

It blossoms just beyond the paths I follow,
It shines beyond the farthest stars I see,
It echoes faint from ocean caverns hollow,
And from the land of dreams it beckons me.

It calls, and all my best, with joyful feeling,
Essays to reach it as I make reply;
I feel its sweetness o'er my spirit stealing,
Yet know ere I attain it I must die!

In another beautiful lyric, one of the most perfect in all American poetry, the "Indian Pipe," a woodland herb, is made to symbolize an analogous perfection in man, and in pure rendering of the mystery in a natural object, lyric feeling has seldom shaped itself into finer or completer subtlety of expression. The second stanza, which suggests the inexplicable wonder behind the appearance, confirms by its questioning that influence which man also feels in those dim perceptions at the root of his being. The lines may be said to contain an essence rather than a thought or emotion, but it is the essence of a passion that has seized the spirit, and exalted the mood of the poet into communion with some rarefied intelligence:

Is this but an earth-springing fungus—
This darling of Fate
Which out of the mouldering darkness
Such light can create?
Or is it the spirit of Beauty,
Here drawn by love's lure
To give to the forest a something
Unearthly and pure:
To crystallize dewdrop and balsam
And dryad-lipped words
And starbeam and moonrise and rapture
And song of wild birds?

If the essence of Mrs. Coates's poetry is its grasp of and aspiration towards the ideal in human nature; if also it recognizes with equal intensity that man can never fully realize the ideal of life completely,—what is the specific quality, then, that so luminously quickens one's spirit, and supports one's weakening faith, and the troublesome doubts that are pressed upon one by the forces of the world.

Mrs. Coates's poetry never fails to sustain the spirit under whatever influence of distress it goes for consolation and strength to the source of her outpouring music. It is because upon the clear and positive foundation of her ideals Mrs. Coates rears the spiritual edifices of man's eternal needs. In these needs are reiterated the larger human ideals. The needs themselves flourish chiefly in the beliefs and hopes and strivings for human contentment and peace, as they express and emphasize their promptings in her poetry, instead of in that fulfilment of deed and growth which brings about a partial realization of the ideal. The edifices of man's eternal needs are shaped in her poetry out of no dream-world, are made of no symbols that float on the surface of man's changing sea of experience. They are the verities of man's mental sanity, as well as the fundamental wholesomeness and grace of physical conduct. So everywhere in Mrs. Coates's poetry, Love, Justice, and Immortality are sung, not as texts with their teachings of morality, social compensations, and philosophies of good and evil, but as the embodiments of warm and vital human traits and characteristics that afford the substantive pictures of life, becoming expressive and interpretative through the medium of lyric art.

In the sestet to the sonnet called "Earth's Mystery" is a typical attitude towards Love, which is represented as the giver of joy:

But as I pondered, seeking, soul-oppressed,
To read the riddle of a world like this—
Where Nature still seems waiting to destroy,
I saw immortal Love descend and kiss,
With timid wonder, reverent and blest,
The quivering eyelids and the lips of Joy!

Love, the very core of earth's mystery, is also the exaltation of man's soul. Mrs. Coates's lyrics never express it on that sentimental or sensuous side which reveals the sickliness and fleetingness of passion. There is a more enduring vitality, a commoner and more infectious charm to the love she sings, because it is the voice of an emotion that strikes its roots deeper in life than physical experience. The love of the sexes may be a sort of supreme mode of this human feeling, as rendered in that fine "Song" which has sung itself into the universal heart of man:

A Foremost American Lyrist

For me the jasmine buds unfold
 And silver daisies star the lea,
 The crocus hoards the sunset gold,
 And the wild rose breathes for me.
 I feel the sap through the bough returning,
 I share the skylark's transport fine,
 I know the fountain's wayward yearning,
 I love, and the world is mine!

I love, and thoughts that sometime grieved,
 Still well remembered, grieve not me;
 From all that darkened and deceived
 Upsoars my spirit free.
 For the soft hours repeat one story,
 Sings the sea one strain divine;
 My clouds arise all flushed with glory,—
 I love, and the world is mine!

but it can only be perfect in this flowering since it controls wider motives, being "creation's breath and vital flame!" This love manifests itself through life, but it is touched with divinity; it flows out of the individual and becomes a human virtue. Because it is that which

. . . draws its deeper breath
 From altitudes that know not death—

it is both the mystery and the revelation of that paradoxical goodness and strength leavening our more worldly tendencies. No American poet has so clearly visioned this radiance of the spirit, with its glimmerings, still pure white, lighting the way that man takes among his fellows. No influence of that austerity in her art, which is like a suppressed sensibility of all that is sad and perplexing in human life, can lessen the sweetness or tinge the joy for which she sees everywhere so great a capacity, so desirable a need, in human nature.

It is by some consistent shaping of truth, on the anvil of life, out of the elements of experience and intuition, of imagination and spiritual sympathy, that the poet comes to impress its substantive quality upon the world. At the heart of all significant poetry is this purpose, working intensely through the natural feelings of the singer. The soul broods and meditates upon a few great and mysterious questions of human experience, and the art that is engaged in becomes in substance so many declarations, in form so many manifestations of these spiritual interests. They are set forth in the abstract ministrations of beauty; and conveyed in moods that take on the palpable and various deeds of man in his private and public history: and is like a golden thread, running through that pattern of form and color woven in the effort to represent the changing and elusive impressions of nature. By personalizing these

questions, the poet achieves conviction; compels truth by emotional sympathy rather than by asseverating a doctrine. It is this way that the art of poetry becomes an interpretation and criticism of life. The embodiment is a ceremony of beauty, the whole spirit of which is a serious and vital message of life's deepest problems. In all the verses that a poet sings is imaged some intuition or feeling or sympathy, which, composed in the process of one's understanding, represents a picture of the poet's passionate realization of the secrets at the root of experience. The quality in the poet that endures is that power to see the workings of common influences upon the heart of humanity, and then visioning them forth into lofty and noble embodiments. The perfection of art makes these embodiments real, gives them an imperishable vitality. And so Mrs. Coates sees Justice at the secret root of all human goodness, and Immortality as the highest and best aspiration for which the soul of man strives through the multifarious shadows of the world. Nature, which Mrs. Coates loves, and whose spirit she renders with exquisite and subtle presentation of imaginative moods, hints to her everywhere, and in all seasons, of these two great attributes; and in man no less, there is a similar reliance, upon these mysteries which he is perpetually struggling to realize, and which by some inexplicable influence is constantly dominating, often against the perplexity of his more practical and temporary desires, the promptings of his inner life. No heartier note is struck, no note more quickening in its appeal to the human heart, carrying with it every sum and compensation of all life imposes, than that promise of immortality to the soul, which is the highest message of Mrs. Coates's art. "Life," to her, "is like a beauteous flower," which closes to the world at even, but to "unfold, with dawn, on heaven." Everywhere is this affirmation, with an insistence that only the greatest poets pursue with variety and freshness of form and imagery. She recognizes, however, the uncertain signs that beset man's path, to lure his faith from the goal, when "Doubt steals the light from immortality," and is ever ready with reassurance to stay the faltering step, never prompted with more solemn conviction than in the final stanza to "Pilgrimage":

Pilgrim, no: I cannot tell.
Strange my course, and stormy woes
And darkness may obscure its close;
Yet I feel that all is well,
For my Pilot knows!

Again, in the very remarkable poem "Easter" there is full avowal of this belief in language pregnant with significance and beauty, whose meaning widens like a circle of ripples upon calm water, linking man and nature in a permanence of growth. The impression this poem

leaves upon one, with its fine spiritual eloquence, its etching of nature's hues and forms, is like some vision come to one in sleep with so strong a familiarity that it does not vanish in daylight, but performs its alchemy upon one's experience with the world. How subtly in this poem is the saddened thought of the beloved dead, transfigured into the gladness of promise, with the recurring, eternal return of the abundant season. Elegiac in tone, in poignant substance it becomes a brooding affirmation of life:

I know the Summer fell asleep
Long weary months ago;
But ah! all is not lost, poor heart,
That's laid beneath the snow;
There wait, grown cold to care and strife,
Things costliest, dying into life:

All changes, but Life ceases not
With the suspended breath;
There is no bourne to Being, and
No permanence in Death;
Time flows to an eternal sea,
Space widens to Infinity!

In its process of artistic embodiment, poetry shapes itself into symbols that render by suggestion, with a lucidity unmatched, the complex emotions of the individual. Feeling is at the root of all consciousness, and the mind defines feeling, by the selection and grouping of images, in its endeavor to express experiences affecting the spirit, whose inward crises are registered upon the world through physical actions and events. In all vital and beautiful poetry, there is at core the continual functioning of a few of the many truths which in their infinite totality make up the standard of perfection for human life. Through the peculiar temperament of the individual poet, these few truths, by the mystery of some prenatal endowment, are woven into the nature as a divine obligation to be promulgated in the world. His art is the beautiful messenger, but these truths are the messages to which the poet is consecrated by the gift of his art; and through it, manifested and made articulate, in whatever substantive feeling that awakes his dream or inspiration,—full-orbed and glimmering,—are these real but unmaterialized objects given utterance. Always, in my endeavor to disengage the vital substance in poetry, I have tried to show what was the quality of that substance, what particular significance it took, in the thoughtful and lovely lyrical work of Mrs. Coates. To interpret her spirit, with all its delicate and subtle sympathies, touching with unobtrusive but familiar interests all human chords, sounding always a clear but subdued music, has been my purpose, rather than to emphasize the various

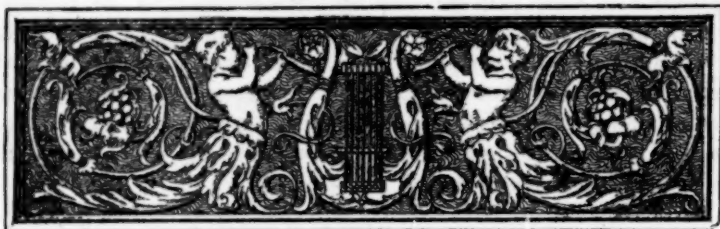
forms with all their felicities of diction for which she has earned as well so wide and enviable a reputation.

In summing up Mrs. Coates's achievement as a poet, one may refer to these rare and admirable qualities. The variety of her lyric forms are astonishing; and in them are moulded substances that in no case deflect from the precise intention which instinct and taste have guided. Her lyrics, always spontaneous in communicative suggestion, possess nevertheless a deliberate ecstasy which hints an indwelling pondering of mood, bearing it full ripe fruitage of thought and feeling. Her kinship in this is very close to Wordsworth and Matthew Arnold, and like them her soul is receptive of objective influences that have a wide application in their personal shaping. She draws from the Olympian world figures that typify some motive or desire in human conduct, and in the modern world the praise of men and women, heroic in attainment or sacrifice; or laments events that effect social and ethical progress, showing how beneficently she has brought her art, without modifying in the least its abstract function as a creator of beauty and pleasure, into the service of profound and vital problems.

No American poet of to-day has mirrored life so faithfully. Adhering to the best traditions of English poetry, Mrs. Coates is one of a small group of contemporary singers who are intensely American in spirit. The note of this group may be an ethical note, against which the unstaple exuberance and passion of some younger poets rebel, but it is the very essence of our national life and institutions, and must be reflected in our truest art. This ethical quality was the virtue above all others that Ruskin, none too liberal in his recognition of America's artistic efforts, praised in Longfellow and Lowell, setting its value above the beautiful but unmoral art of Keats and Shelley. The social conscience of Whitman is only a more emphatic rousing of the ethical spirit to action. The cardinal virtues of democracy are Love and Justice; Whitman insisted on their being recognized in social and political relationships, as well as in private and domestic intercourse. The distinction of this sound human quality does not prevent an increasing elaboration of the art that preserves it, as Mrs. Coates's poetry exemplifies. Its contagious appeal reaches beyond the limitations set by the reiteration of a single note, which generally attempts to enforce a philosophic or psychologic attitude. By assertion and affirmation, not of a mood or a dream or a passion, but of life itself as a whole, equalizing all these substances in one optimistic glow of aspiration, does one succeed in "envisaging the veiled heart of things," and come to interpret and express what the vision reveals of those secrets which lie shimmering on the surface of mortal experience.

And this is what the poetry of Florence Earle Coates accomplishes.

In both substance and form it has added richly to the body of American art. Its sane and healthy outlook upon the world, rendered with a refined and subtle expression of language and form, maintains the clean and wholesome, and yet no less magical and passionate, standard which characterizes the superior achievement of English poetry. Certainly the promise which Matthew Arnold discovered in Mrs. Coates's earlier work, and was the first to voice—though since confirmed by the foremost critical contemporaries—has fulfilled itself in the wider, more general acceptance of the public, whose appreciation of her unusual gifts has by common election placed her in the front ranks of our native singers.



"IF A LAD LOVE A LASS"

BY ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH

If a lad love a lass,
 And the lass say nay,
 What is the lad to do then,
 Pray—
 Really what should a lad do, would you say?

If the heart of the lass
 Be a-feigning cold,
 Smile at another—'t is a method
 Old—
 Many a maid is thus controlled.

If a lad love a lass,
 But the lass say nay,
 Be a little more kind—'t is a better
 Way:
 Let word and deed more love convey!

WHAT THERE WAS OF IT

By *Anne Warwick*

I.

"WHAT there is of it's all right," said Lodi plaintively, gazing at his pudding, "but there's so confounded little!"
"Are you talking now of marriage," asked his wife, "or of the pudding?"

"Well—er—*both*, as a matter of fact—though I happened just then to mean marriage. You see"—he looked at her resentfully, though certainly the look of her was far from a thing to resent—"you're all over the place, keeping up with your popularity and your profession——"

"And *you're* all over the place, keeping up with *your* popularity and *your* profession!"

"Oh, well, for a man it's different. At least, it used to be," said Lodi impatiently—"and you've never taken up with suffrage, thank the Lord!"

"No, but"—she pushed her chair back a little from the table set in the charming old garden; and paired her slender fingers thoughtfully upon one another—"you see, Lodi——"

"That's just it! I *don't* see." Lodi swallowed his last reluctant mouthful of pudding, and, too, pushed back his chair. "What you get out of it, I mean."

"Out of our marriage?"

"No; out of *it*—your dancing and——"

Dolf stirred a little in her chair. "You mean that dancing as a profession is scarcely as highly rated as—well, opera-singing, for example? That it's inclined to be lightly thought of, and—let's be quite frank!—to put one down at once as doubtful—perhaps vulgar?"

"Well," said Lodi uncomfortably, "something like that; yes."

"Yet you can scarcely call 'The Blue Bird' or 'Peer Gynt' " (mentioning the pieces in which she had been appearing) "vulgar?"

"My dear child, it's not *I* who call 'em vulgar or anything else! It's *people*. And people who wonder why on earth my wife is dancing for her living!"

"Perhaps they forget," said Dolf serenely, "that that is what she was doing when you married her."

"No, but—oh, I'm bothered! You can see the difference easily enough, Dolf: before you were married you had to earn your living, yes! But since then—well, I've enough, haven't I? Don't we have everything we want? And I should think you'd occupy yourself with the house more—and sew, and things."

"I was not taught to keep house," said Dolf, her eyes lingering on the sketchy beauty of the villa that lay beyond them. "I was taught to dance. In this age, I think one is quite justified in disliking to do a thing one does badly. Whereas one's specialty"—her eyes now shone softly—tenderly almost, though Lodi could not see—"well, Lodi, you write operas. I should think you'd know."

Lodi rose, restively. "I—I—oh, it seems to me entirely different, that's all," he said, pacing up and down the garden path. "I suppose, if there'd been children——"

Dolf's mouth contracted. "There weren't children," she said abruptly. "Will you take coffee to-night?"

"Thanks." Lodi came over to a tray that a servant had brought a few minutes before and left on a little tabouret near Dolf. "I suppose you think I'm a crank," he said ruefully, "but I can't see it, that's all—for a woman."

"Are you sorry for the women who sing your compositions?" she wanted to know. "Don't you 'see it' for them either?"

"Oh, they!" said Lodi, ruffling his black hair. "They are n't women—they're geniuses!"

Dolf laughed a little. "And I am just 'talent,' eh? Well, my dear, I won't quarrel with you—and I don't think you a crank, no. I think you only unmodern. For my platform of woman's rights, Lodi, lies in the heritage of every woman to the *motif* of her life as she decides it: art, a profession, business, or——"

"Marriage?" suggested Lodi.

"H'm—yes. After all, marriage is more a background than a *motif*, is n't it? A much happier background," said Dolf lightly, "than drear spinsterhood." She came and stood by him. "You have made me very happy, Lodi."

He stroked her hand for a few moments silently. Their coffee, on the little table, was forgotten. "Ah, Dolf," he said at last, "Dolf!" There was yearning in his voice, and passion, but, for some reason, he checked it swiftly. "You're due at the theatre at nine, are n't you?" he remembered. "Shall I drive you in, in the big car?"

They had been married three years. During that time Lodithorne Clarke had achieved celebrity. Dolf had remained what she was: a successful classic dancer, rather better perhaps than when at twenty she had been forced to take the place of a mother who was famous; yet certainly not a genius. They are, supposedly, born; Dolf was, by con-

fession, made—at the expense of untiring energy and years of faithful training. She had talent, too, and a wistfulness for her art that rather more than matched her fellow-artists' self-satisfaction. And she was, in consequence of it (as Lodi said), popular—distinguished, as well, and *choyée* for her delicate charm and finesse. Yet—it was true—people thought it odd that she kept on dancing.

"Of course, it's awfully smart and all that, to have a fad," said Reggie Thorman—one of Lodi's satellites; "something one's a regular wiz at, too, but—er—it seems a sort of pity that *his* wife——"

Every one who had known Lodi first thought of her as *his* wife: Lodi was *he* to a great many awe-struck idle souls, who kept him for their excitement some time longer than was usual with their weary interest. And not one of them was a bit surprised when it began to be whispered that *he* was seeing a great deal of little Mrs. Nesbit—a widow, "but so sweet and domestic, my dear!—such a *womanly* woman."

Mrs. Nesbit had a house near Lodi's, and it seemed quite natural that he should fall into the habit of dropping in there when Dolf was at rehearsal or during the long evenings that she spent at the theatre. When he was not working, himself, he argued that he must have *something* to do, and—his friends kindly commenced to justify him to Dolf.

"Even if she is a widow," said Reggie Thorman, "she's awfully quiet, and—and *all right*, you know."

"I should n't worry a scrap, my dear," Lodi's sister said anxiously. "Lodi's such a *steady* man; and you know, dearest, you would keep on dancing!"

"I know," said Dolf quietly. Yes, she kept on dancing. And that spring her manager got her an excellent engagement in London, and she danced at the gala performance at the Coronation, and was invited by Royalty to a garden party. And Lodi stayed in America—to finish his new opera, he said. But at the end of the summer, when Dolf returned, the opera was still unfinished.

"And had you a successful season?" he asked smoothly, on the first evening that they dined together again in the fragrant garden. "Letters are rather curt on detail."

"Oh, yes! In England they think rather more of dancing, Lodi—I was made to feel quite a personage."

Lodi smiled. "I am glad," was all he said. They talked desultorily of a dozen things—somehow, nothing lasted them very long as topic. Both were rather glad when at the end of the week Reggie and Lodi's sister came to stay.

On Sunday the four were out in the big car, and happened to pass Mrs. Nesbit's place. The widow, who was strolling toward the gate with her little son, waved to them. "Come in," she called, "and have tea. Boy and I are boring ourselves frightfully."

Lodi's sister glanced out of the tail of her eye at Dolf. But Dolf went in. When they were seated in Mrs. Nesbit's immaculate drawing-room, "Now, do tell me," said the lady sweetly, "did you make dozens of conquests in London, Mrs. Clarke? And were they, any of them, half as clever as your husband?"

"London," said Dolf calmly, "like my husband, is rather involved. They appeared to like me, but—they're of so many likings, one can scarcely count on them. . . . No sugar, please. . . . And, Lodi, I've forgotten how many you take, sweet-tooth?"

Mrs. Nesbit quietly dropped two lumps in Lodi's cup.

("Oh, I say, that was really too bald of her," murmured Reggie. "Poor Dolf! We ought never to have come!" wailed Lodi's sister.)

"But surely," said little Mrs. Nesbit, her left arm round her angelic little son, "surely you count on your husband, dear Mrs. Clarke?"

"Yes," Dolf said steadily; "I count on him." But it was to Lodi that she said it. And Lodi began, very fast, to talk of Mrs. Nesbit's wonderful roses—would she not show them? And Mrs. Nesbit's model dairy—he so wanted Dolf to see it. And Mrs. Nesbit graciously consented, and (Boy always at her side) led them from her spick-and-span drawing-room into her spick-and-span garden, delightful in its primness.

When Dolf admired it, "Well, it's a good thing I have it," Mrs. Nesbit said ingenuously. "I'm such a simple little person—I've no gifts of any consequence—oh, a little voice, that Mr. Clarke is kind enough to say is not such a *small* voice! But my house and garden and the dairy—I do live in them, don't I, Boy?"

"Yes, Mamma."

"And they're a great comfort to me. They take the place of so many things. A woman's home, I always think—I'm afraid I'm frightfully unmodern!" she told Dolf with a little laugh. Lodi was watching her—Lodi's sister and Reggie had contrived, as somehow they always did, to be left rather far behind. "I suppose, to be fashionable, I ought to want a career, but—I'm just a little red-headed stick-at-home, am I not, Boy?"

"Yes, Mamma," piped Boy obediently.

As a matter of fact, she had quite marvellous red hair—masses of it; very different from Dolf's gold-brown mane. And a softly animated manner, that was in direct contrast to Dolf's serene negligence. Lodi, obliquely, watched both women; and was unhappy. He wondered if he ought not to tell Dolf what was in his mind for Laura—Mrs. Nesbit; he almost thought he *ought* to tell her. And yet——

When they went home, Dolf noticed for the first time in her life that her drawing-room was dusty, and that there were magazines stacked under the piano. She spoke quite sharply to the parlor-maid. On Monday, to the gardener also. Then on Monday afternoon her man-

ager came out from town to talk over some new dances, and after that she gave not a thought to either the drawing-room or the garden. She was more and more in the theatre.

And it gave her a positive start when one of *his* intimates said languidly to her one day, "And what do you think of Lodi's getting little Mrs. Nesbit such a good berth? It's so frightfully difficult getting into The Comique, too!" Dolf had forgotten all about Mrs. Nesbit.

But, "You might have told me," she said to Lodi gently. "At least, I'm your wife and——"

"My dear," said he dryly, "if the background shifts, you have always the *motif* running excellently." Indeed, (by sheer hard work and perseverance) she was now almost more of a celebrity than he.

Dolf's color flamed suddenly high. "At any rate," said she, "Mrs. Nesbit seems to have got over her aversion to a career, and her passion for her house and garden, and the rest of her old-fashioned proclivities."

"She has a voice," said Lodi simply.

"And what about her child?" demanded Dolf fiercely.

"Why—I suppose he has his nurse. And——"

Dolf gave a ringing laugh. "It's really very quaint," she said, her lip curling.

Lodi stared. Never had he seen Dolf so unreasonable; so—so almost *feminine*. Of course, one might have looked for jealousy in the average woman; but Dolf—— "I regret if it has put you out," he said stiffly. "I was glad to do what little I could for Mrs. Nesbit. I'm sorry for her."

"Of course!" murmured Dolf. "The cleverness of the woman! But there, Lodi," (seeing his lowering face) "I won't tease you any more about it. No doubt" (lightly) "Mrs. Nesbit found, like all the rest of us, that in this age of specialty one requires something more blatant—that is, distinctive—than domesticity for advertisement. One must be advertised, you know."

"I don't know!"

"All except composers"—with a delicate laugh. "*Their* reputation seems to take care of itself—which is very lucky," added Dolf, in a different voice.

"Look here, Dolf, what are you getting at? I've never heard you talk like this before. You talk as if I——"

Dolf gave a little yawn. "Yes? As if——?"

"Nothing," said Lodi shortly.

They were sitting, as usual, in the garden—the fall morning shining about them, with its touch of crisp. Dolf had—actually—a bit of sewing in her hands: a torn tunic that she was mending. Lodi was reading. For some minutes there was silence. Then—

"Good-morning," said a small voice behind them. "I've brought a

note. How do you do?" It was Mrs. Nesbit's "Boy"—grave and round-eyed and very clean and starched, in his white sailor-blouse and knickers.

"How do you do?" said Dolf softly. She forgot that he was Mrs. Nesbit's—for the moment.

"I'm five," said Boy, regarding her with serious interest. "I was five yesterday. D' you want to see my rifle?"

"Rather!" laughed Dolf deliciously. "Have you it?"

"'Course I have—only, I left it on the porch, because Mamma says——"

"What about that note?" broke in Lodi.

The round eyes were transferred to him. "Oh, yes; it's here." Boy fished it out of a bulgy pocket. "That's chestnuts," he explained to Dolf, "for my dog, Nobs. He eats 'em. Only, Mamma won't let him, 'cause he chews up the rug. But I let him," said Boy calmly.

Lodi was reading the note. "Mrs. Nesbit wants me to meet her at The Comique at twelve," he told Dolf, with slightly heightened color. "It's to hear her run over her part. So I'll motor in, if you'll excuse me from lunch?"

"But certainly"—Dolf's head was bent intently over her sewing.

"I've got to have lunch with Miss Spink," said Boy, shaking his shock of brown hair resentfully. "That's the governess. She's got freckles."

"Then, you shan't." Dolf turned to him impetuously. "You shall stay here and lunch with me, and you'll show me your rifle, and we'll send for Nobs and feed him chestnuts, and we'll sail boats in the pond, and——"

Lodi gazed at her in amazement—at the flushed cheeks and shining eyes and tremulous smiling mouth. When he looked back at them from the house, Boy was on Dolf's lap, rapturously listening to the story of the new colt at the stables, and rumpling Dolf's gown, regardless of its freshness. It occurred to Lodi that he had never seen Boy rumpling Mrs. Nesbit's gown—only within the graceful circle of her arm. And he went rather thoughtfully from Dolf and the child, to Mrs. Nesbit at The Comique.

"And have you heard?" Lodi's sister asked Reggie breathlessly two weeks later. "They say the little boy simply *lives* there—with Dolf, I mean. They say he *adores* her, and that Mrs. Nesbit——"

"Mrs. Nesbit's pleased to death," said Reggie, with a grin. "She's going about saying how delightfully old-fashioned Mrs. Clarke is, but so domestic—such a little stay-at-home, 'quite different from *him*'! Oh, hat-pins!"

"They don't spike Dolf. I've never seen her looking happier—though she is a bit pale," said Lodi's sister.

"Who would n't be? Dancing all night, and tearing round with a child all day!"

"I think it would be rather nice to tear round with a child," said Lodi's sister, half to herself. But he heard her.

And certainly Dolf found it nice. Though it did take it out of her. She was up at nine, to be ready for Boy when he came at half past, and they raced about the place or played in the garret until one, when he went home to lunch; or, more usually, stayed. In the afternoon Boy rebelliously "did lessons" with Miss Spink, and Dolf practised feverishly, and gathered up a hundred ravelled ends about the house. From four to six Boy was there again—shrieking and laughing with her over blindman's-buff and hop-scotch, and tea. At night she hurried to the theatre: it was breathless, this life of mixed *motif*; but Dolf thought that it was worth it.

Until, one day, the doctor told her certain things that sent her home white and terrified to Lodi. She had scarcely seen him lately. "He says I must stop dancing entirely for six months," she repeated unsteadily, "or else—oh, Lodi!" The vision of a hospital, gleaming instruments, long months of suffering, rose up to paralyze her.

Lodi was tender, but a bit constrained about it. He patted her shoulder and told her not to worry—she had iron nerves (or had had); it would all come out all right. He saw her off to Florida the night that Mrs. Nesbit sang her hundredth performance. The little widow had triumphed. She was now "Laura Lauray," and her name in two-foot lights above the theatre. A manager was negotiating with her for a London engagement in the spring. But she never forgot to whom she owed it all. She was very fond of Lodi.

And she graciously sent her little boy to Lodi's wife (now growing strong and brown-cheeked at the sea), that "poor dear Mrs. Clarke might have a bit of young life about her"; while she—Laura—went to England. It was very touching, her thoughtfulness. But Lodi wished she would not arrange her complexion for the street as she did for the footlights. Yet, half-heartedly, he promised to "run over" and be present at her first night, if he could manage it.

The next day he went down to the shore, to spend Sunday with Dolf and Boy. And the sight of Dolf (whom he seemed to see for the first time in months) struck him dumb. Tall, glowing-eyed, her tan cheeks delicately flooded with carmine, supple and lithe, as she had ever been, and with a touch of buoyancy added—he fairly leaped to her from the train.

"Dolf—Dolf—I"—he was stammering like a school-boy—"I—why——"

"Here's Boy," she said demurely. And the small person was round his neck, with a shout. Nothing demure about Boy—these days!

"But you *have* changed him," said Lodi wonderingly, that night after dinner, when Boy was in bed.

"He's changed me, too," said Dolf quickly. "I—perhaps Mrs. Nesbit's right, Lodi. I believe she is: and I *am* an old-fashioned thing, after all."

Lodi caught her to him. There was nothing constrained about him this time. "Mrs. Nesbit," he began—"oh, Dolf, against your hair, I don't want to talk of *Mrs. Nesbit!*"

Three months later, "And do you know," cried Lodi's sister to Reggie triumphantly, "he never went to England at all? Not all summer!"

"Of course not," said Reggie loftily. "He stayed with *her*."

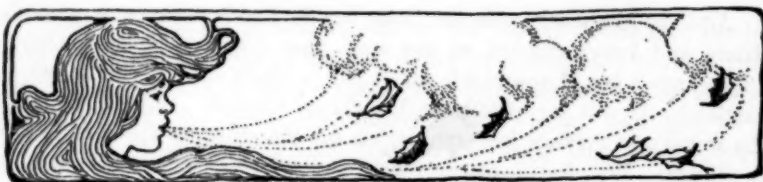
And over their breakfast-table—which was now the same breakfast-table—Reggie and Lodi's sister smiled at each other: a little secret smile of understanding.

While Dolf and Lodi were standing at the door of an empty, sun-lit room in their house, and choosing wall-papers—with camels and frisky elephants and Teddy-bears.

Boy had gone home to stay. But—"I should think he'd like that one," said Dolf anxiously. "*Boy* liked that one."

"He—he——" Lodi could not keep his voice steady. "After all, it'll be only his background, Dolf."

She looked up at him. "But background—background *has* been known to turn *motif*, though," she said. "Oh, Lodi, what there is of it—marriage—what there is of it is *everything!*"



THE TRUE PROPHET

BY RICHARD KIRK

WHO'd believe what March-winds tell him,
 When a crocus dare gainsay it!
 Spring is coming!
 Arch deceiver, book-and-bell him!
 Truth is truth; though he delay it,
 Spring is coming!

A FALSE AURORA

*By Caroline Wood Morrison and
Alice MacGowan*

I.

"GUS muffed that ball, and did n't seem to care a bit. But Andy knocked him a hot one, and——"

Don Harvey, eighteen years old, the height of a man, but with a child's eager soul looking out of his brown eyes, halted for breath—he had been going at this gait for some time. He grasped his chair-arms, and took fresh hold of his subject. It was one which engrossed him and apparently enthralled his listener.

"There was a man on third, you see—don't you, Miss Rose?—a man on third, and one on first, with two out—two out, you know. Rush Hammond was pitching for us, and he took the first drop of the game; and then Gus just romped in and claimed three bags, bringing two men home for us. You ought to have heard the grand-stand yelling to our boys, 'Tighten up!' 'Put out the fire!'"

The woman facing him leaned forward in her chair, her white fingers, showing a plenitude of rings, clutched about a fluttering fan. She hung on her visitor's words with an absorption apparently as complete as his own. The experienced eye would have found her mature. Perhaps youthful enthusiasm was not the less welcome to her for that reason.

Don gazed at her, delighted. From the massive and highly-colored pompadour to the extremely pointed toe of her slipper, she was assuredly grown-up, and her interest was as plainly centred in him, whose conversation she treated as that of the most full-fledged of gentlemen.

"Gus flies out," he was encouraged to continue. "That left Rush up against it. Billy Emmons was on second base, and he swings to right field. When I came to the bat, the grand-stand was raising Cain. It was up to us to show 'em——"

"And you—you—you showed them! Oh, you splendid Don! How proud I am of you!"

She swayed toward the boy, adulation in voice, look, and accent. It was a heady brew for a chap of his age. Don steadied himself, gazed at her uncertainly, then flinched and looked away.

"Aw, I did n't do anything, really—not so much. A fellow has luck, sometimes. Two home runs did help, of course; but Gus made one of 'em."

"With you at the bat, Don—with you at the bat," urged the listener, in actually tremulous tones, her bright eyes still fastened upon his face.

One could not expect a boy to see the pencilled line wherewith she had increased the size and brilliance of these features, nor to divine the commercial genesis of the roses that bloomed beneath. Yet the lad she flattered moved the heavy muscles of his shoulders as if tired. In a normal and strenuous boyhood, self-conceit had been hazed and beaten and mercilessly chaffed out of him. Fulsome praise alarmed him. He shied at it like a nervous horse, veering from the embarrassing subject.

"Say," he began ("say" is youth's Americanism for "sweetheart" when love is incipiently budding), "say, will you go to the next game with me?"

"Will I! Oh, Don, I'd love it of all things. But I thought you would n't want a girl bothering around there. How good and sweet and dear you are to me!"

He reddened sensitively under the tan, and got to his feet. He was actually afraid to find her words delicious—suppose one of the boys should overhear such a speech, applied to tough, strenuous, domineering Don Harvey?

"I'll come past for you, then, Friday afternoon," he hesitated. "I reckon I won't see you again till then. A lot of us fellows are going on a tramp out to Gunter's Springs and back."

"To where, Don?" his companion demanded sharply, with a startled glance.

"Gunter's Springs—over in Hiawassee County, you know," explained Don, and turned doubtfully toward the door. But Miss Heymore stopped him.

"Don—wait a minute," she said; then seemed doubtful whether or not to utter what was in her mind, while her visitor stood in some surprise, questioning her with his glance. Finally she broke out:

"Gunter's Springs—that's where I used to live before I came here, Don."

The boy's face—eloquent as his tongue was helpless and unskilled—showed instantly how impressive he found this statement, and she went on, breathing quickly:

"You—Don, if you hear anything against me there, you won't believe it, will you? The world is so cruel to a girl alone—as I've been. Other women are jealous, and— There was one old woman there that talked wickedly about me. Promise me you won't believe a

word! Promise you'll come right to me with whatever they say. I'll tell *you anything*."

"Aw," said Don Harvey, when at last she had done and would let him speak, "aw, what would I care what they said?" Then, his contemptuous indignation waxing, "What would I be doing listening to 'em at all?"

He dismissed the whole matter with a shake of his shoulders. Once more he turned to go, hesitated, and looked at her dumbly. This was farewell, and there were things which instinct told him he might have for the taking. Dim visions of rapture swam before him. A clock struck twelve.

"Gee! I did n't know 't was so late," he muttered, brought suddenly back to realities. "Mother'll be on her head. Why did n't you tell me, Miss Rose, and turn me out?"

"Your mother," whispered Rose Heymore softly, laying her two hands in Don's strong brown fists. "I think your mother is the dearest, loveliest woman I ever saw, Don. I want so much to make her acquaintance. I know you adore her, and that's enough for me."

She raised her eyes with an effect of worship to the boy's face. But he was inept at this sort of thing.

"Ma's all right," he said loyally, as he fairly quailed before the situation. "She sure is a brick. We've always been full partners—Ma and me. I'll bring her 'round to see you some day, if you'd like me to."

"Oh, Don, don't ask her—yet." In the stress of the moment's emotion, Miss Heymore evidently forgot herself, for she leaned almost on the boy's shoulder, holding up a face exactly in the manner of a child waiting to be kissed. It would seem that even the dumbest mind must have understood the situation.

And Don was not dull; he was only dazed—bewildered. At parties, in games of forfeit, he could kiss girls—oh, yes, and had. But this was a lady! To touch her hand had heretofore sufficed to set his head spinning. He pressed the soft white fingers now till her rings hurt, but she made no outcry. He was a little afraid of her at such times, and very much more afraid of himself and the emotions which possessed him.

"Good-night!" he ejaculated thickly, and hurried out into the quiet street.

For a while he stumbled toward home, unseeing. For him the sky was full of low-swinging moons that looked at him with Rose Heymore's eyes—old, old moons, dear boy, such as shone on ancient gardens where young lovers lingered to whisper long good-nights; the moon of Romeo and Rosalind—for Don, the moon that meant Juliet had not yet arisen.

II.

His mother had sat late by the little table in the sitting-room. Now, having finally gone upstairs, undressed, and drawn a kimona over her gown, she fluttered uneasily about her chamber, going every few minutes to the window and peering around the shade.

"Better come to bed, Mattie. The boy's all right. He'll be in presently." Don's father offered the customary masculine comfort and admonition.

"Yes, dear," said the little woman softly, not at all as signifying that she meant to obey his suggestion, but only to make courteous acknowledgment that she heard and heeded. There was silence again. Once more Mrs. Harvey lifted the curtain and peered out. The way she stood, patient, mute, watchful, changed the man's mood. He hunched the sheet around his neck, and began to speak more at length than was his wont.

"Honey, Don's the kind that has to have lots of experience," he said gently. "He'll have a dozen love affairs before the right one comes. He's not like me. He's like his mother. Remember how you used to have the boys on a string, girl?"

"Oh, and I ran awful risks, too, Rob. I do so want to help Don over or past or around those places," murmured the little mother. "It is n't because this Rose Heymore is a milliner—I respect a woman that earns her own living. It's just because she is a woman, and too old to really care about a boy like poor Don. I've seen her—Mary Steel pointed her out to me yesterday—and she's nearly double his age. She was painted, too; I know she was. Oh, I—Rob, I'm so worried. It seems to me I must do something about it."

"I hope to the Lord you did n't say anything about paint to Don," put in the man, lifting his head to look around at his wife in alarm. "I have n't even spoken to the kid, myself. I went to Gus about it—there's a boy with an old head on his shoulders. He says the woman used to live up at Gunter's Springs, and when they go camping up there, he knows somebody that will open Don's eyes without seeming to be interested in the matter. Let him try. At least, we can't approach the boy ourselves. Don't you see?—if you and I put in a finger, it will be parental interference, and make matters worse."

Mrs. Harvey agreed inarticulately. She was wiping away some hard-wrung tears. The staunch little woman was as unused to weeping as Don himself.

"There's Don now!" she cried softly, and ran downstairs to open the door for her son.

Don came in noisily, blissfully unconscious that everybody else was not eighteen, in love, and eager to wake and meditate upon the sweet-

ness thereof. Somehow he was moved to extra tenderness when his mother met him and stood looking up into his face, a perplexed little figure with soft, rumpled, graying hair, and a tender, doubtful smile about her lips.

"Did you sit up just for me?" he began genially. Then with the fretful caretaking of males for the women of their household: "It'll make you sick to be up so late. You need n't worry about me. I'm all right. I can take care of myself." He laughed down at her indulgently, adding, "Say, Mother, sometimes I believe you don't know that I'm over three years old."

She stood dumb, troubled, afraid to speak.

"What's the matter?" he questioned, with a sharp side-glance so like his father that she realized his manhood, and her worried maternity quailed before it. "You don't mean to say you were uneasy about me, Mother," he asserted. "I was calling on a girl, and she ought to have told me it was gettin' late. I was so interested talking, I never noticed. Got anything to eat 'round the house?"

Somewhat reassured by this wonted query, Mrs. Harvey meekly took up the serving attitude, and ministered to the corporeal needs of her son, while her heart ached to save his soul a bad stumble in the dark. But the big hand of male youth does not cling to mother's fingers. She would try to be glad of his manliness, and find new ways of enlightening him where she felt sure he sorely needed her help. Words swelled and died on her lips like foreshortened waves running weakly to a barren beach. Don got up from the table, and she gathered courage to speak.

"Who—who were you calling on this evening?" she faltered. "If you don't mind, I'd like to talk to you a little about one of the—that is, a girl, or rather a woman, that you——" Her voice failed her utterly. He was drinking at the refrigerator. Don made a serious, absorbing business of pouring water down his muscled young throat.

"Hey?" He came toward the table and set the empty glass down, looking at her inquiringly. She was trembling from head to foot; but her emotion had been wasted, her wavering sentences unheard. She was glad of it. She feared to do more harm than good by her interference, and so merely shook her head and let him go on speaking.

"Gus and me and Jeff Hazencamp have changed our plans, Ma. We're going to tramp to Gunter's Springs," he repeated the information. "The grub and things we got packed will be all right. We got to get off before day. Do you know where my old shoes are? I'll need those pants you mended for me last night—we're all going to wear the worst duds we've got. I reckon we won't be gone more than ten days—we aim to make it in ten. You won't worry about me there, will you?"

He bent his tall head around and examined her countenance anxiously, uncomprehendingly; and he pounded her shoulder a little, under the impression that he was giving a caress.

"No, I won't worry," she assured him.

"We'll have about twenty-five pounds apiece on our backs, and it's mighty near sixty miles through the mountains. But Gus is a stayer. Jeff's as hard as nails—so'm I. I'll bet we pull it off in ten days, and don't have a bit of trouble. Don't you fret, Ma."

How little he knew what danger she really apprehended for him! She reached up and kissed him silently; then, that there might be no disagreeables in the parting, cheerfully showed him the bundle ready, and the packages he had brought from the store and laid beside it.

"I told somebody this evening that you and me was full partners," he said softly, as they went out into the hall. "Dad asleep?" They had halted at the foot of the stairs, side by side. "I'd better take off my shoes." And she left him sitting on the lowest step to do so.

III.

THE camping trip went through successfully, as did also Gus's scheme for enlightening Don on the subject of his charmer's past. It was contrived that the boys should hear an innocent old lady detail the facts that Rose Heymore had attempted to sue a man for breach of promise, and been bought off with money enough to go to Watauga and set up a millinery store; and how she had cruelly robbed of payment the widow with whom she boarded. He took these revelations silently. To his cousin's anxious eye, there was no evidence of whether he found them alienating or not.

It was the last evening, footing it back into Watauga, brown, tattered, inconceivably dirty, and footsore, when Augustus found out that a fool will not be turned from his folly merely by the things which his eyes can see or his ears hear. It had rained earlier in the day, and the evening was closing in with that clear light of lemon yellow or honey gold over everything, which trembles in the autumn air at such sunsets. The dust was laid, and a mingling of sweet, spicy odors came from the roadside. Jeff Hazencamp had turned off toward his quarter of the town, and Don and his cousin sat down in a fence-corner to rest and let it get a little darker before they entered town streets. Don lay on his back among the drying weeds, his eyes on the heavens, his heart with Rose Heymore. She had a dress just the color of that sky. No, it was n't a dress; it was an auto cloak, long, shimmering, and silken. She had shown it to him once, and put on a big white hat with a tremendous veil that tied in a great cloudy bow under her chin, and asked him how he liked the looks of it. He wondered if he could ever get

the money together for an auto ride for her. He wished he could. She ought to have such things. She was a lady. But it would cost almost as much as the engagement ring. He relinquished the fond fancy with a sigh.

Far down the road, as if evoked by his dreaming, sounded the faint "Honk! Honk!" of an approaching automobile horn. The boys drew back into the shadow as well as they could, to hide their tatters. Along the country way came a motor party, shouting, gesticulating, and making the quiet evening resound to the clatter of their mirth. A stout, red-faced man in goggles was driving the auto, and a woman on the seat beside him struggled for the lever. He was fending her off with one hand, and laughing loudly at her, while a couple in the tonneau applauded and cried on the fight. The scuffling woman on the front seat wore a long, shimmering blue automobile coat, and on her head was a great white hat, its tremendous veil tied in a cloudy bow under her chin. Don felt all the blood in his body rush to his face as he recognized these garments and appurtenances. Then he rolled over and hid his countenance amid the dusty weeds.

"Well," said Augustus, as the automobile whirled past them, "did you see who she was with?"

Don sat up, half defiant, half sheepish, and shook his head.

"It was Steiner, the man that keeps the saloon on the corner beyond her shop," Augustus told him.

"I guess that was Mrs. Steiner on the back seat," said Don, lifting his head a bit.

"Well, it was n't," Augustus contradicted promptly. "It was the woman that has the hair-store in her shop; and the man with *her* was Steiner's barkeeper. Gee, Don! that's a pretty crowd for any woman to be out motoring with—ain't it?"

"I don't believe it," said Don stubbornly. "She told me herself that she had to be very particular about—things, living alone as she did. She said that about my coming to see her, unless—well, she said it about me."

The boy knew that the speech he remembered was that which had led him to determine on buying the ring. Rose Heymore had pointed out that, unless a friend was serious, any attentions shown to her, in her lone, unprotected position, were likely to be misconstrued—not by her, but by a cruel, censorious world. Don rose suddenly to his tall young height and stood looking down at his cousin.

"Think of staying there all night?" he inquired agreeably. "I'm going home. I've got some business to attend to, and an engagement to keep this evening."

Augustus got up and meekly followed.

IV.

DURING the week past, Mrs. Harvey had gone about her work a haunted woman. Whenever she was alone in the house, a small shadow bobbed at her knee and followed after her steps—the little boy that was. She could hear the baby voice that babbled on all day, like a rapid purling brook, mounting now and again to a fluty, liquid clamor as a stone checks its course; she could see his curly head and uplifted eyes, his small, eager, asking hands; but when she would have clasped the baby sweetness and held it close to her sore heart, the voice was silent—the little shadow was only a shadow.

"He's gone," she said to herself over and over. "My baby is gone; my beautiful, splendid boy is gone. And oh, the man that he has almost come to be does n't love me as they did! Somebody else is more to him than I can ever be. God help me! God direct him! Oh, if I could only see some way to be of use in it!"

Darkness had just fallen when, upon these dreams and recollections, burst suddenly the real Don himself, ragged, unshaven, and dirty.

"Is there plenty of hot water? Did my laundry get back? Do you know what became of my red tie?" He fulminated these inquiries in swift succession, after he had kissed her hastily. She smiled up into his face of young virility.

"How tanned you are, Don—and how well you look! And did you have a good time?" Then she added tremulously, "Will you be going out-to-night? Are n't you too tired?"

"Yep, had a good time—great time," responded Don. "Yep, I'm going out. I ain't tired. Gee, but that laundry's rotten! I wish you'd jack 'em up, Mother. Now, why the nation did n't I take my suit to be pressed before I left?"

Mrs. Harvey's intuition warned her upon whom it was that her boy intended to call. Her heart sank with the thought that any revelations which Augustus might have been able to bring about were ineffectual. Yet she set out Don's supper and waited on him, and even managed to eat a bit with him, chatting all the time like a good fellow, and taking the greatest interest in the account of how many miles a day the boys had made, and what cormorant appetites they had brought to the evening meals around the camp-fire. Later, she found the red tie for him, and sat while he shaved himself and brushed his hair. Choking back the tears that wanted to come, as she looked at the soft young beard of manhood on the cheek of her baby of yesterday, she put a shaking, futile hand on the brown mop.

"I've saved one of your yellow curls," she said almost defiantly. "How I did hate to cut them off! If I'd had my own way, you'd be going like Samson still."

It had been a sore subject of old. But this evening Don only laughed at her indulgently.

"They made too good a handle for the other fellow when you got into a mix-up, those curls," he said. "Am I all right now, Mother? Will I do?"

She took her courage in both hands. Instead of answering, she asked, in what tried to be an unconcerned voice:

"Are you—are you going to call on that Miss Heymore this evening?"

"Yep. Made the engagement before I went away."

He did not look at her. His eyes stared straight ahead. Then there was a sudden, sharp movement; he was only squaring his shoulders, but it seemed almost like shaking off his mother's detaining hand.

"Are you going right there, Don?" she persisted, though inwardly shrinking.

"Nope. I've got another errand first. That reminds me, Mother; please give me the money you were keeping for me—I'll need it all this evening."

"For—for what, Don?" whispered his mother. "Are you going to spend it for her? I—I can't bear to seem to pry and spy on you, dear; but really, she's—she's not——"

In sheer terror the little mother broke off and stood trembling. Don's face had darkened. There was a look in it which had never before been turned upon her.

"You're against that poor girl, too," he said, and his voice rasped with the queer, rough edges of a boy's rage. "They're all down on her—my poor Rose! She's got to have somebody to take care of her." He paused a moment, then blurted out abruptly: "I want my money to buy a ring, because I'm going to ask her to be my wife." And he held his young head very high, but he still avoided looking at his mother. "You'd love her, if you knew her as I do," he went on, unconscious that his listener had slipped away. "You'll love her when she's your daughter."

A touch on his hand brought his glance down to see the money proffered, and his mother wiping her eyes softly. Of the things she had thought to say at this time, none now seemed possible to her, least of all any appeal to the boy's father, since the two strong masculine wills clashing could only bring pain and harm—maybe wreck and ruin. She let him go without a word. Yet after he was gone she began some hasty, feverish preparations of her own. Her fingers were all thumbs; she could n't find anything; she could n't see her own face in the glass, for blinding tears that stung and hurt as they welled. Yet, somehow, at long last, she managed to get on her outdoor wear, and was hurrying

toward the little millinery store on the side street before she had fully determined what her errand there was. She thought that perhaps, if she found Miss Heymore at all a womanly person, she would—well, she might say to her, "I am Don Harvey's mother. Did n't you want to meet me? Is n't there something you want to say to me?"

The shop seemed empty as her quiet foot reached the door; but at the sound of her step, there was a movement at the rear. The fluttered, laughing woman who came from behind a Japanese screen that cut off the back portion of the room, to wait on her unwelcome customer, had left in the shelter of its obscurity a visitor to whom she said:

"Just sit here a moment. I'll go out and make short work of that tiresome old dowdy."

She had hated the millinery business always. Avid for pleasure, admiration, and a life of ease, her instinctive outreach for these was toward the other sex; and, furious that she must still work and serve, she had been moved at times to treat with derision the women who were necessarily her sole patrons. To-night, flushed with the wine of triumph, she was a little beyond herself. She still wore the long blue silk cloak, and the big white hat, with its shrouding veil, was pushed back and hung on her shoulders like the head-gear of a little girl at play.

At Rose Heymore's first appearance down the long, dim room, Mrs. Harvey saw painfully good reason for her son's infatuation; then, staring into the face that met her own across the counter, Don's mother revised her impressions. Not a day under thirty, its shallow prettiness already scored with mean and peevish lines, an artificial bloom upon her cheeks, a dry, metallic tint to the spreading coiffure. Oh, something must be done to make the boy see this woman as she really was!

"Well, what do you want?" prompted Rose, as the new-comer continued to regard her with a steady, appraising gaze.

Mrs. Harvey stood silent, a small, stubborn figure. So many thoughts, questions, apprehensions, surged in her mind, that she found no words in which to reply, even to a second demand, uttered on a shriller note. Looking at the other, she felt that what she had hoped to be able to say was almost ludicrously impossible.

"You—you might show me some hats," she temporized.

At the suggestion, sudden rage took the milliner. She knew this type of customer—every piece of headgear in the house could be pulled down, spread upon the counters, tried upon the gray-tressed head, and pushed aside, no purchase made, while the proprietor's own highly interesting affairs waited.

"Not if I know myself, old lady!" was Rose Heymore's mental declaration of war. "Some hats?" she echoed insolently. "How many do you generally wear?"

She tittered at her own wit. The proprietor of the hairdressing portion of the establishment, coming in at the instant, offered her an audience. Masonic glances and signals passed between the two shop-women.

Mrs. Harvey, still half benumbed by the size and imminence of the problem, still studying the milliner only with a view of finding some avenue of understanding to the real woman, noted nothing, till Miss Heymore, approaching with a large red and black picture hat, made as though to remove her customer's headgear and substitute it. Mrs. Harvey drew back.

"I never wear red, or anything loud like that," she said quietly.

Both women laughed long and heartily, as though at an exquisite jest.

"Well, I should think not!" said the milliner, ceasing, her eyes bright with anger. "This hat requires a pompadour to rest on. You would have to have some hair before you could wear such a handsome thing to any advantage. Jen, I think the lady's your customer—not mine. You sell her about 'steen pounds of hair, and then maybe I can fit her with a hat."

She brought the words out with the gusto of a wrangling kitchen-maid. As though to punctuate her speech, the screen at the back of the room crashed over flat on the floor, and a tall, broad-shouldered young fellow strode across it, setting his ruthless foot upon its trumpery decorations as he came, and Don lined up beside his mother. It was like a battle-ship going into action to aid a distressed tug. His deep tones, guttural with rage, boomed through the room.

"Miss Heymore, do you think that's the way to speak to my mother?"

"Your mother!" shrieked the milliner. "Oh, Don, don't be mad at me! I did n't know who she was. Oh, Don, I'm so sorry!"

"You said you knew her." The boy spoke with a sudden clearing of vision, an impersonal stare at his charmer. "You told me you knew her, and you quoted some poetry about her hair, when I said it was the nicest gray hair I ever saw."

"Yes, but when she came in that way, I did n't. It was Jennie laughed at her;" and Rose Heymore turned helplessly to her associate.

"Jennie laughed!" echoed Don; then with a boy's brutality: "I reckon I know that giggle of yours. Why, you told me—not five minutes ago, you said—that my mother was your ideal of womanhood, and that her s'silver locks formed an aureole about her brow. I guess that did n't go with any of your hats. Come on, Mother. If you're ready, I am."

He had scowled down at them all from his man's height, studying the figure of her whom he had found so fascinating but so few moments

ago. Where now were the graces that had ensnared him? Of course she painted—anybody with eyes could see that. Of course she lied—he had just been hearing it. Of course she cared nothing about himself, except that such a marriage would patch up her social standing; and he would have a little money when he was twenty-one—she knew that—he had told her. All at once, something bleak but salutary blew over the boy's heart and quenched the flickering torch of a false Eros.

"Come, Mother," he repeated more gently. "I'll take you home."

At the door, he turned, looked long and steadily at the woman who still followed, dabbing imaginary tears from her eyes and volleying explanations. These he cut across with an abrupt "Good-by, Miss Heymore." And both women knew that the words were intended to be final. One of them—that one who had struggled with the turbulent, resolute baby Don—was aware that they were certain to be eternal.

While they remained in the shop, Don's attitude had been hostile, menacing almost. The boyish voice rang out loud and defiant. He spoke rapidly, as though afraid that if he hesitated he should break down and not speak at all. When they were out on the street and going home, he strode so fast that the little mother had twice to check and remind him. Then he was all penitence and called himself names.

"I—I forgot you, Mother," he said awkwardly. "I was thinking about that woman back there, and how cruel it is that such people—I wish I'd——"

He faltered into moody silence, his eyes on the pavement; and thereafter Mrs. Harvey mutely kept pace with his long stride as best she could. But when that haven of the vanquished and heartsick—home—was reached, Don followed his mother upstairs to her own room, and, as she dropped into her little rocker by the window, flung himself down on his knees beside her and hid his face in her lap.

It had to come. She was glad to be there to soothe the tumult of her boy's pain, which was mingled with a sort of terror. Short, difficult sobs interrupted his speech, such as she had not heard from Don since babyhood.

"The awful thing about it is to think that they're all like that," he said, raising a tear-disfigured face to his mother's. "They look so beautiful, and they seem so good, and they make you feel as if the world was—they make you feel as if you could just do anything for them—and then they turn out to be like that—that!"

"Oh, no, not all of them, Don—not many of them," his mother whispered, laying her cheek against his, smoothing down the rumpled hair. "You feel dreadfully hurt now, dear; but after it's been over longer, you'll remember that there are plenty of good women in the world; and love, when it comes to you, will bring happiness instead of pain."

Don flinched and crimsoned at the word, as though she had mentioned sacred mysteries.

"It does—it ought to—ought n't it, Mother?" he faltered huskily. "There's Father and you—I'm sure you're everything to each other—but, then, I can't have anybody that's perfect, like you are."

It was a blunt boy's clumsy compliment. Martha Harvey closed her eyes before the sweetness of it, and shivered a little. In the years of comradeship between herself and this man-child of hers, she had been building up in his heart, it seemed, an ideal; and now he thought her perfect. It made her feel like praying—or weeping. Instead, she laughed a little, very tenderly and softly, patting his head, whispering to him:

"There'll come a time, dear, when you'll find her. She'll be the one perfect woman then." There was a bit of a gulp, like a boy over a stone-bruise at this, and then the little woman went gallantly on: "She'll be your standard of perfection, Don; and God send that I've brought up my boy to win such a woman and be worthy of her!"



THE GOOSE THAT LAID GOLDEN EGGS

(Revised)

By Ellis O. Jones

A CERTAIN Man had a Goose which laid him a Golden Egg every day. A foolish friend advised him to kill the Goose and realize at once on the future.

"No," said the man; "that is not the proper way. I know a better." Thereupon he organized a company and issued stocks and bonds which he sold at a good round figure. Then he gave out the report that the Goose had quit laying. This enabled him to buy the stock back at a low figure. Then he gave out the report that the Goose was laying two Eggs a day, which enabled him again to sell the stock at a big advance. After he had repeated this process a number of times, he was so rich that he did n't care what the Goose laid or when. Accordingly, he invested his wealth in gilt-edged securities, journeyed abroad, and went in for art.

THE VACANT FORTY

By Paul Lee Ellerbe

AT noon Cranston stood at the door of his house and looked wearily towards the distant, snow-crowned mountains. Gloriously they stretched themselves before him, in all gradations of exquisite blue and white. He knew every slightest indentation of that serrated line, from the cone of Pike's Peak on the left to the sugar-loaf of Long's on the right. Steadfast, rigid, eternal, the line had never changed. Storms of snow and dust had shut it out; the seasons had splashed it with a thousand dyes; clouds had hung about it their filmy scarfs or swallowed it up in swirling gray; but ever when these things passed, the calm, cold face Mount Evans made stared straight up to heaven in the old way, and the Tudor castle farther south stood sharp against the sky immutably. During the hard, bitter months Cranston had found comfort there, in the West.

But now he looked unseeingly. He spoke aloud to himself, and his voice shook.

"It's no use. I'm done for. It's the hospital first and then the grave. I can't help it. It has been a hard fight, but I guess this is the end. And God knows I'm tired!"

He swayed and bent in the grasp of a deep-set, persistent cough, and the crimson spots on his sunken cheeks grew brighter. When it passed, he trembled and gasped, and seated himself on the ground beside a clump of cactus he had never found time and strength to remove. His well-worn clothes offered indifferent protection from the prairie wind. The full blaze of the autumn sun was grateful to his shrunken frame, and he warmed himself in its rays.

Pulling over his eyes the brim of the old flapping hat he wore, he reviewed the lamentable past.

He thought soberly that the thing had been foredoomed to failure. A prairie homestead five miles from anywhere, and neither health, experience, nor money—they might have known better, he and Mary. They had reached a desperate pass in Denver, but this was worse. Denver, he thought, was almost the hardest place in the world to get work, especially if one was ill.

He went grimly over the days he had spent there, fighting for a foothold: rising each morning with a little less hope; facing each night a

surer defeat; until at last he was beaten, and he knew he was beaten, and every one he talked to knew it, and he could not have sold silver dollars for ninety-five cents.

When a small check had come from home—the last, they wrote him, that it would be possible to send—he and Mary had decided to enter the land. They had often talked about it before, and there had been plenty of reasons for each to give the other why they should go where they could be together all the time and away forever from the wretched boarding-houses to which their poverty had reduced them in the city.

On his claim he had had constructed the simplest form of house, a dugout—which is a cellar beneath a pointed roof. Only the roof projected above the ground. Each of the two rooms obtained its light from the window set in the gable end. One entered the door through a kind of pit, protected by an overhanging roof. Rather a cosy little place, the storm-tossed couple had thought it when they moved in. And, indeed, they would have been happy there, for a strong love held between them, and they were young; but the money had slipped away, and Cranston had not had strength for the work.

He had grown fond of the prairie: of the sunrises over the level miles of featureless monotony; the sunsets behind the friendly hills; the hour before dark, when the range in solemn, purple mystery stood out against the orange sky; the calm, majestic nights; the little wandering winds, laden with clean, sweet odors, as full of mystery as the tang of the sea. He had caught in its fullness the love of life, and had worked to win. Early and late he had toiled, far beyond his strength. He had told himself he would rest in the winter. If he made one good crop, he could afford to rest. One good crop! He had staked everything he had on it, praying for rain. Heart and soul, he had played the game; and now, as he sat in the sun, the winter coming on, he said to himself that he had lost. The rain had not come. He remembered some one's summing up of homesteading a few days before, when he had been to town for supplies.

"The government," the man had said, "bets the homesteader one hundred and sixty acres of land against sixteen dollars and his time that he will starve to death in five years."

The government had won. His corn was dead to the roots; the sun had burned it like a flame. In the dugout there was fifty-two dollars and thirty-five cents, and this was his total capital. He had cut a little wild hay by the dry bed of the creek, and had managed to extract a few loads of shrivelled potatoes from the thrice-baked soil. For these he had given, he believed, his life. For the second time, he looked at death, and he was wondering how he could get his wife away.

"The sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep," he muttered.

He remembered wistfully the doctor's dictum that good food, rest, and peace would restore him even now. The stars were about as easy to get, he

thought, and rose stiffly to go in out of the wind, which was growing colder.

But from the west came a cloud of dust, golden in the sun, and he waited to see who travelled at the heart of it.

The road that led to Cranston's place was two faint tracks across the prairie sod. The real road—which it joined about a mile to the south—was an affair of some seven pairs of deep ruts, cut by countless wheels and heavily overlaid with dust. At the junction a vehicle drawn by two horses emerged from the cloud. Even at that distance, Cranston knew it at once. Every one knew it. It belonged to Al Jones. Once, long ago, it had served as stage between Sagebrush and a place of mushroom growth and duration, whose reason for existence had been summed up in its American name of Enterprise. Some five years before, Enterprise had been carted away, mayor, aldermen, and every plank and nail, and Al's stage was probably its only monument. A driver of recognized ability, as an orthographist and aesthete Al left much to be desired. His vehicle displayed the legend:

ENTERPRISE
AL. JONE'S HAK

and he had chosen for its coloring the vilest shade of yellow in the world. However, little of the paint remained, and his passengers were not as a rule sensitive on the other score.

As Al drove up now, Cranston saw that two men occupied the rear seat. After a bit, he knew one of them for Willets, a real-estate man from Sagebrush. Just for a moment he entertained the hope that Willets had come to buy his relinquishment, but almost immediately he realized its futility. Only irrigated land was being sold in that part of the county. A new ditch had been constructed to water the land eight or ten miles farther east, and Willets was probably going there, with a customer.

The real-estate agent and his companion got down as Jones stopped his team.

"Hello, Cranston!" said Willets. "Hope you and the missis are well. Dr. Allen, shake hands with Mr. Cranston."

The two shook hands tentatively. One of them did not like a certain unctuous consequentiality displayed in the clothes and bearing of the other, who, in turn, wondered if this ragged, ill-looking fellow was really the kind of person to whom a man of wealth and standing should be expected to extend the greeting of an equal.

"We thought likely your good wife could fix us up on the dinner proposition," said the agent cheerfully. "The Doctor and I are going over to take a look at a piece of land under the Rattlesnake Ditch."

Cranston flushed painfully under his coat of tan, but neither of them

noticed it. It was impossible to avoid giving dinner to people who passed that way, for they could get it nowhere else. Since he and Mary had become so desperately poor, they had been compelled to allow those who offered to do so to pay for what they got. Cranston remembered a week when they had lived on the small amount made in this way. The money he had was scarcely sufficient to enable him to carry out his plans for his wife, and, come what would, he could not waste *any* of it. There was very little food in the house: if these men ate, he must let them pay, however much he might dislike the transaction.

"Yes," said Cranston awkwardly. "Come in. I'll speak to my wife."

They followed him into the dugout, Dr. Allen with the air of a man approaching a lunch-counter, where it is an affectation to uncover one's head. Cranston looked round and saw him.

"My hat-rack," he said, "is a makeshift, but you will find it just behind the door, Dr. Allen."

Dr. Allen bowed ponderously, cleared his throat, and removed his hat.

"Mary," said Cranston, as his wife came to meet them, "these gentlemen wish to dine with us. I believe you know Mr. Willets. Allow me to present Dr. Allen."

"How do you do? How do you do, Mr. Willets? Of course you want dinner—there's nowhere else to get it. I only wish I could manage to give you a good one. But you will remember that I would if I could, won't you? Henry, is it possible that we have any canned things left?"

"I am afraid not," said Cranston, smiling and shaking his head.

"Never mind," she continued. "You will get a good supper to-night at Sagebrush. They say the new hotel is quite wonderful."

"Henry, have you really left Mr. Jones sitting out there with the horses! Go and get him at once."

She carried it off with a high hand, gaily and with complete success. Cranston told himself there was no one like her, and he vowed anew that he would devote the brains and the strength that were left him to cutting away the worthless hulk of his existence from her strong young life.

Mrs. Cranston seated her guests as far as possible from the stove in the little room that served her humble household for all purposes except sleeping, and while she prepared dinner managed to talk to them about the things they liked.

She served a meagre repast upon a small, deal table; but she served it daintily upon blue china and a cloth of snowy white. Dr. Allen talked loudly and rudely, but charmingly she bore him down, until his pompous insolence softened into friendliness before her buoyant courtesy; and a certain dangerous gleam in Cranston's blue eyes and ominous tightening of the muscles of his haggard mouth disappeared and he smiled.

During the course of the dinner, Dr. Allen talked a good deal about his own affairs.

"Ir-ri-gation, mad-am," he said, dividing his syllables with dignity and emphasis, "is a stu-pen-dous thing faw the West."

Then he took a loud sip of coffee, demanded attention by a mighty clearing of his throat, and fixed his eyes seriously upon Willets, who wagged approval as the moneyed man continued:

"This pro-ject that my good friend Willets is fostering, if the right kind of pro-gres-sive men get behind it, by putting water upawn these barrun acres, will make the desert blossom like the rose. If I decide to take a-holt of this thing, our ditch will water all this part of the county."

Cranston started, and his heart—which, after all, was young still—leaped within him. But Willets scowled, and it was plain to see that he kicked the financier under the table, for Dr. Allen hastily added:

"That is, of course, all this part of the county east of Rattlesnake Crick. Mr. Willets will tell you that the way the land lays on this side the crick would pro-hib-it its in-clusion within the scope of our op-er-ations."

"Yes, yes," said Willets. "The crick itself is east of here, and all the land slopes east from the crick. Could n't get any water here from Rattlesnake. It's up-hill all the way."

Cranston made no reply, but he watched Willets narrowly, and talked to Al Jones about the new hotel. He knew quite well that no water could be put on his place from Rattlesnake Creek, but he pondered Allen's obvious slip.

As soon as the meal was over, the real-estate man was apparently eager to be gone. Cranston determined that the unpleasant task of receiving payment should not devolve upon his wife, but when he had screwed his courage to the sticking-point, she forestalled him.

"It is too bad," she said frankly to Willets, "that Henry and I did n't make a crop. You see, everything failed, and we are compelled to let people pay for dinner when they stop here. Some day, when things are better, I hope all three of you will come and dine with us, as our guests."

And so the seventy-five cents was paid. Willets, who had been on the point of offering it, was immensely relieved, and so was every one else.

As Cranston watched the faded yellow stage take its eastward way, he thought bitterly of the money Dr. Allen would make by handing Willets a check, and of the failure of his own struggle for existence. Jones was driving across the prairie to gain the road again. At the top of the rolling hill he stopped his horses. Sharply defined against the brilliant blue of the eastern sky, the battered old vehicle took on new life in the glare of the sun. It stood motionless for some time. Willets was pointing, with outstretched arm, from the rear seat. Then he got down, and Cranston saw him tie his handkerchief to one of the rear wheels.

"By George!" he murmured, "they are going to measure that land."

As he spoke, he caught the flash of something in Sanderson's hand, and guessed it a compass. The horses started slowly south. Willets's head, thrust well out of the vehicle, was clean-cut against the sky. Cranston knew he was counting the revolutions of the marked wheel, and stepped quickly back out of sight, trembling from the excitement within him. A fierce rage took hold of him.

"The fat old scoundrel," he said aloud, "is going to put a desert filing on the land at my very door. If he does, it will be because the ditch is going there. Willets lied. They can't put water there from the Rattlesnake, of course; but how about Sunset Creek in the west? With water on that land, it will be worth fifty dollars an acre, and here I am, dying like a fool for the lack of a little money!"

With his head in a whirl, he went in quickly, to sit down and think it over. He found the table cleared and his wife bending over a large, hand-made map spread out upon it.

"I was just going to call you," she said; and Cranston saw that she too was a-quiver with eagerness. "Look at this, quick. Mr. Willets must have dropped it. He had a lot of papers in his pocket. When I picked it up the string came off, and I saw here your name—'Cranston'—do you see?—on this brown spot.

"It's a map of the land his ditch is going to irrigate. All the homesteads are colored brown, and all the desert land is blue. And here's the line of his ditch. Look! Mr. Willets was not telling the truth! The water is not to come from Rattlesnake Creek at all, but from the west—from Sunset Creek!"

"I always said it could be done," said Cranston, looking at the map intently. He tried to be quiet, but his voice broke in spite of himself. "It was I who first suggested the thing to Willets. Almost *all* the land he is going to water lies east of us. To get his ditch over the hill, he's got to bring it through the vacant forty acres north of us (and he and Allen are driving over that now), or else—else"—he commenced to cough—"or else through our land," he gasped out. "The forty is lower than our place. If they file on it and take the ditch through it, it might as well be a hundred miles away, so far as we are concerned, for we could not get water from it. If we had the forty, we would control the only outlet and could make them pay for a right-of-way: our land and the forty together form the gateway of their whole district.

"How has he marked the forty? Look at this, Mary: 'Dr. Allen?' He has a question-mark after it. He did n't know whether Dr. Allen would file on it or not. Well, by Heaven, Dr. Allen won't file! I am going to file—now. I can drive to Sagebrush and catch the three-o'clock train. It is slow, but it will get me to the land-office at Center in time to file to-day. I will pick up witnesses who know the land at Sagebrush. If I could make the drive over to Buffalo on the other railroad, I could

save an hour; there's a train about three from there that gets into Center in forty-five minutes; but Tony could not make it.

"If only this were Eldredge's day with the mail! With his fast team, he could take me into Center before either train. He knows the land as well as I do, and could act as one witness, and Tanner, the grocer in Center, could be the other. Eldredge often makes the trip without the mail, if any one wants to go, and he may pass to-day, but it would n't do to count on him.

"I must drive to Sagebrush myself. It's our last chance. It will take about half the money we have left, but if we win we can hold this place, and we can live."

"Shall I go with you?" she said, a little anxiously; for he looked too ill to make the trip alone. She would have liked to go in his place, but she knew he would never consent, and wisely she wasted no words.

"No, dear," he said. "I can travel faster without you. Besides, you must be here to return the map. Willets is sure to miss it and stop for it on his way back. If we were both gone and they could not find the map, they would suspect something at once.

"Thank Heaven, they have to go back to Sagebrush with Jones! If they went on to Buffalo and caught the fast train, I would have no chance.

"Tie up the map as it was, and pretend you did n't find it. I think I'd drop it behind the door, where they hung their coats."

"I'll manage all that," she replied. "But hurry. I'll help you hitch up. And for my sake, my darling, be careful. We've nothing left, you and I, but each other. All the land in the county would n't pay for another break-down. You must take no chances with my happiness."

Cranston put his arms very tenderly about her, wondering if even she knew how the sun of his world rose and set in her clear, frank eyes.

Hitching up was a matter of a few minutes, and he was soon in the seat of his light wagon, and on his way to Sagebrush. As he topped the last rise that allowed a view of the little roof of his dwarf home, he caught a glimpse of the big yellow stage slowly completing its survey of the vacant forty. And then he touched his little horse with the whip, and both of them settled to the task before them.

It was a perfect afternoon. Long's Peak stood up magnificently and took the light like the robe of Gallahad. The brilliant sun burned hard and clear, checkering the vast landscape with calcium brightness and big purplish shadows of clouds; setting a-glitter the fragments of mica on every little rolling hill.

A light wind sang pleasantly in Cranston's ears. But he did not hear it. He did not see a little desert lark, with delicately poised wings, that skimmed just ahead of him for a mile or more, a scant three inches from the ground, sailing with wonderful accuracy in one of the ruts of the road. Even an antelope, scarcely less fleet upon its delicate, twinkling

feet than the bird itself, went by unnoticed, gliding under the lowest wires of the fences like a graceful ghost and rapidly fading away into the neutral-tinted prairie.

The great plains about him and the folk who dwelt thereon received none of Cranston's attention, because Tony, his little horse, was favored with it all.

Tony was accustomed to take his own gait on his journeys to and fro. He left the dugout at a brisk, distance-devouring trot, and his master kept him at it steadily for a mile. Then, wishing to relax a bit and loaf along as usual, he found, to his surprise, that more speed was demanded. And so he bent to the work and rattled at an ever increasing pace over the dusty road, and trotted into town a wet and weary little steed.

Cranston had been able to do a kindly thing or two for Al Jones, in spite of his own ill plight, and so the liveryman's stable was ever at his disposal. He left Tony there as quickly as he could, and by dint of half an hour's vigorous search succeeded in finding two men who knew the land he wished to enter, and who would go with him as witnesses.

When he sat with them at last in the train, holding three blue round-trip tickets in one hand and mopping his forehead with the other, he was consumed with weariness. His cheeks burned ominously, and during the hour's ride he coughed without cessation. But his eyes were clear and steadfast, and his mouth was resolute. He lay back most of the way, scarcely able to speak to his companions.

With rough sympathy, they helped him off when the train stopped at Center. The land office occupied half of a little low white building, the front of which was Tanner's grocery store. It was plainly visible at the end of the wide street, sitting, indeed, in the middle thereof.

Cranston led the way along a dirt sidewalk, flanked by a little ditch that furnished water, in season, to the meagre gardens of the town, and overhung with cottonwoods that dropped their broken branches and twigs after the manner of their kind.

As he approached his goal he walked faster and faster, and his excitement increased. The town was very quiet in the clear light of afternoon. An inquiring hen, a shaggy, nondescript dog, one of whose remote relations had been a collie, and three or four people were the only things stirring in the streets. The rest of the population were at the depot, or indoors. Within half a block of the land office the three passed near Center's little hotel, called, of course, The Commercial House.

"Well, if there ain't Willets!" said one of Cranston's companions. "Thought he druv over this morning to'rds the new reservoy."

The name cut like a pain. Cranston stopped short and clutched the board fence tightly, as he stared at two men on the porch of the hotel. They were Willets and Dr. Allen. As he looked, the real-estate man held open the door and passed into the house after the portly figure of his

customer. Cranston stood for a few seconds, blankly gazing. Then his hope surged up again. Perhaps they had just come.

"Quick!" he said sharply. "Willets and I are after the same piece of land;" and he strode rapidly over the remaining half-block and into the land office.

"Hello, Turner!" he said in a tense, hard voice, to the receiver who came forward to meet him. "Will you tell me, please, if a desert-filing was put on the forty acres south of my place to-day? Here's the description."

Turner glanced at the piece of paper and sympathetically at the broken young homesteader before him.

"It was entered to-day," he said. "Hope you didn't want it, Cranston. My deputy took the filing while I was out. I didn't notice the name. Do you want to know who it was?"

"No," replied Cranston absently. "I know already. Thank you, Turner;" and he turned and stumbled blindly out into the glory of the setting sun. On the sidewalk he pulled himself up as best he could and faced his failure.

"It was good of you fellows to come with me," he said mechanically. "I am not well. I think I shall have to go somewhere and lie down awhile. We'll all have supper at the hotel, though, and go back—go back— When is the next train?"

"Why, at eight o'clock," they said wonderingly.

"Yes; that's it. We'll go back at eight o'clock. I'm going to lie down now."

He walked slowly back to the hotel, making no effort to think, all his mind intent upon securing rest. There was no immediate need of appraising the future. No hope remained in it, and no change would come. An hour's rest might enable him to take this knowledge quietly.

He went into the lobby and sat down in the first chair, intending to ask for a room in a moment; but Dr. Allen, who was standing by the stove, advanced towards him, extending a fat, newly warmed hand, and said, with an expansive smile:

"I congratulate you, Mr. Cranston. You see, I bear no malice. You are a very for-tu-nate man. And your wife is really wonderful."

Cranston clutched the arms of his chair and got slowly upon his feet.

"You old scoundrel!" he said with stinging emphasis. "You—you——" He struggled to hold it back, but his cough came convulsively, and in spite of himself he fell back into the chair and fought for breath.

Dr. Allen stood with open mouth and hand still outstretched, and watched him. At last Cranston conquered his weakness. Concentrating all his strength for the effort, he was on the point of expressing himself as explicitly and forcibly as his strength would permit, when the inner door opened, and there before his burning eyes, as though she were a

vision sent to comfort him; radiant with happiness, though covered with dust; bright-eyed and triumphant, in spite of disarray, stood his wife.

She came quickly to him, sat upon the arm of his chair, and put her hand on his shoulder. Her look told him that she longed to put her arms around him and comfort him.

"My poor boy!" she said. "What a time you have had! But it's all right now. They came on the train from Buffalo, but I came with Mr. Eldredge, who passed our place, after all. Here's their check for three hundred dollars for a right-of-way through the homestead, and all the land can be watered. I filed on the vacant forty."



OF MELODIES UNHEARD

(To John Keats)

BY MAHLON LEONARD FISHER

"**H**EARDED melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter" ?—then, O Poet of All Time,
 How sweet it is with thee, where endless rhyme
 More softly flows than faery-tides unstirred;
 Where, all day long, no hint of half-spoke word,
 However lyric, falls on listless ears,
 And the hushed rains, more tenderly than tears,
 Drip near the nest of some unvocal bird!

Yet all arch-harmonies are there, and thou,
 That knewest such, needs sense them in thy sleep,
 And have sweet cognizance of seas where creep
 The pristine Ships of Song, whose every prow
 Doth cleave the Waves of Singing silence-crowned—
 Lest some loud oar awake thee with a sound.

AUNTIE JANE'S REMINISCENCES

By Dr. Charles C. Abbott

“JOHN, Henry, William, Ellis, Peter, Daniel, and little Anthony—and then came me. Folks used to say Father had a fine family o’ boys and Poor Jane. I s’pose they were tired o’ havin’ babies.”

Saying this, Jane Gilberthorpe smiled as well as her wrinkled face could change, shifted her needles, and commenced knitting again—but only for a moment, for she soon gathered her thoughts and went on with her reminiscences.

“Just as though one girl was one too many! One day I heard one o’ the neighbors say, speakin’ o’ me, that I was like the boards and bricks left over after the house was built—not much account. I never somehow could forget them words, and yet I could n’t see what they meant; but now, turned o’ eighty, it’s plainer. They’re all gone, and here am I, good for nothin’. Them things that’s least account, you know, never get lost or broken, and it’s what we set most store by that’s soonest taken from us.”

For a few moments Aunt Jane rocked slowly in her old chair and half closed her eyes.

“When I was a bit of a girl,” she continued, “somehow I was only in the way, and got pushed into the corner. It was n’t that any one was real unkind, but only too busy just then to bother with me; but I grew up, spite o’ all, and not one of the boys but found me helpful when they’d families o’ their own. I’ve no real cause o’ complaint, but somehow, when I get to thinkin’ things over, it seems to me they might ‘a’ been different.

“The folks used to laugh when, at last, I’d a young man droppin’ in o’ evenin’s, but, spite o’ all, it would ‘a’ come to somethin’ had n’t some folks talked too much, and, tellin’ what was n’t so, spoilt all for me. How folks can deliberately lie and murder a neighbor’s peace o’ mind and go unpunished, I can’t see. There’s trouble enough for ‘em if they murder a neighbor outright, as if peace o’ mind was n’t somethin’ to consider. But, then, why tell all about it now, when everybody’s dead and gone, and better all round what I could tell should die with me!”

“But tell me about that young man,” I urged. “It will do no harm.”

“Nor no good. Ephraim was a well-built lad, and, what was better ‘n

good looks, he would look you right in the face and say straight out what he had in mind. I don't mean to say he was handsome-like, for he was n't, but his face was good. To be sure, his hair was sort o' red, and his nose spread out like, and there was freckles; but then them eyes o' his made up for it all. I can see 'em yet. He sort o' did n't look at you, but into you, and it was the real thought talkin' to what you thought all the time. You could n't 'a' fooled him, had you tried. He was a risin' farmer at the time, and more'n one, seein' that, considered his money more'n an offset to his looks and set their caps. I had the lead, much to everybody's wonder, when Abigail Taylor said she always heard I was n't all right and the family all said so, and that the doctor shook his head when he heard about Ephraim, and said it all so she knew it would get to Eph's ears, and, sure enough, he fell off comin'. I was broke up about it, but too proud to let on, and then sickness came on me, and when I pulled together again and got around I was n't much more'n a shadow, they said.

"It was all fixed between Abigail and Ephraim, and I was plucky enough to congratulate him one day, but what I said and what I thought did n't gee very well.

"Ten years after—oh, it was a long wait—Ephraim called at brother Henry's, where I was livin' then, and said to me, when nobody was 'round, 'Jane, I've been a fool!'

"'Just found it out, Eph?' says I. You see, Ephraim was a widower now, and it sort o' come to me he was tryin' to make up after all these years.

"'Yes,' says Eph. 'I was a fool. Such a life as I led!'

"'You should n't say nothin' again' the dead,' says I.

"'It's so,' says Eph, 'I should n't, but Jane——'

"Here I did n't let him go on, but says I, 'Eph, I can't take up with a fool in my old age, whatever I might 'a' done when I was younger.'

"Now, you ought to have seen Eph look. But his wits come to him in time, and says he, 'Why, Jane, I never asked you nothin'.'

"Sure enough, comin' to think of it, he had n't, and it's a puzzle to me to this day how I happened to say out what I did. I s'pose I really was so wishin' he would speak that I got the notion he had, but la! it's almost fifty years ago, and here am I, turned o' eighty, still a-wonderin'."

Auntie Jane's was no longer the tireless tongue of younger womanhood. I was fortunate to have learned what I did. For a full half-hour I left her to herself, and then ventured to ask one more question:

"So, then, Ephraim was the only man in the world for you?"

"Yes, the only one. Anyhow, no one else ever came, but I think now that was 'cause my brothers frightened 'em off. I was always wanted to look after their babies. Ephraim tried once more—I think, to make me change my mind and marry him, even if he was once a fool.

"He happened in one Sunday afternoon. It was a May day, and the apple-trees all a-bloomin'.

"'Jane,' says he, after some ramblin' talk, 'I don't see why, because our partners are took away early, a man need to be mis'rable the rest of his days.'

"'Nor I, Ephraim,' says I.

"'Then, Jane, why not——'

"'No, Eph,' says I, pert-like, like a sassy child; and Eph, he got up out o' that garden bench, real red in the face, and walked down the path, never sayin' even good-by.

"I watched him a-goin' for a minute and then could n't stand it no longer. 'Eph!' I called, but he did n't stop. 'Eph! Eph!' I called louder, 'come back a minute!' but he just walked on out o' sight.

"I waited pretty near all summer for Eph to come back, but he did n't, so says I one day to brother Henry, 'I'm goin' to Daniel's for a visit.' They been a-askin me to come, and I went; and here I am with Daniel's children, and my next movin' will be my last one. I never saw Ephraim again. Now, sometimes, when I'm sittin' by the fire, and when it's spring and the apples is in bloom, sometimes I can see Ephraim walkin' down that path and can 'most hear myself callin' to him. But la! here am I, an old, worn-out woman, and talkin' in this way. I had n't ought to do it."

EVERYDAY PHILOSOPHY

A PROFIT is not without honor in this country.

THE time to give a man taffy is before it's time to give him his epitaphy.

PESSIMISM is often the outcome of insufficient income to make a man optimistic.

THE man with last year's automobile is more likely to feel out-of-date than the man with last year's horse and buggy.

AMONG the greatest fools on earth are the miser who saves all of his money, and the spendthrift who does n't save any.

SOME men who drop nickels into the contribution-basket at church carry away more religion than some others who drop dollars.

William J. Burtcher

THE LITTLE HOUSE

By Annette Thackwell Johnson

THERE by the roadside, with a peepul tree on one side of the gate and a clump of bamboos on the other, surrounded by a garden typically Indian, lay the little house—quaint, silent, deserted.

Often on my early morning rides I had looked at it and longed to know its story. That it had one, I was sure. Romance had been there! Behind those fine old veranda pillars and out there in the garden, love had perhaps walked hand in hand with sorrow. Had it been worth while? What was the story?

I strove to forget it, but, whatever my resolve in the morning when we left our bungalow, with Bobs's head firmly turned in the direction of the parade-grounds where fashion aired itself, before the ride was over we invariably found ourselves approaching the little house. Bobs would slow down his pace to a walk, and I would look and look at the old deserted garden and the white pillared veranda—look and look, and wonder! Once I thought I saw the laughing face of a girl peeping out at me from behind the big bushes of jessamine; sometimes I imagined that I heard the sound of sobs. Always I felt the call—the call of the little house. Who had built it? How came it there, so far from the station where the English lived—five miles, at least, in the heart of the Doon? And then, why was it deserted?

The road leading to it was very beautiful, winding through five miles of one of the most picturesque valleys in the world. Clumps of feathery bamboo and tallow trees bordered it; on either side lay prosperous-looking tea-plantations; above were the Himalayas, magnificently close. What a spot in which to dream—and love!

I pictured Her young, with dark, curling hair and deep, wistful dark eyes—graceful, dainty! She must have looked just so when she peeped at Him from behind the clumps of jessamine. She would laugh and dare him to chase her, and then she would run—I could see her, catching up her dress in front to keep from tripping. And He, when he would catch her—doubtless he made her very happy! But it had not lasted, for the bungalow was deserted now.

What was He like? I had no picture of him—nothing but the shadowy form of a man—stretching out his arms.

It was in March when I began to dream about the house and the garden. Always I saw Her walking with bent head, and hands locked in front—beside her an indistinct figure. I could smell the scent of the jessamine and the roses as she brushed the flowers aside and looked up at Him with piteous, suffering eyes. What was it? *What was it?*

One morning, as we approached the house, Bobs stopped, and I *koihaied* [called]. Obedient to my summons, from the back of the building appeared a decrepit gardener, whose presence on the premises accounted for the thrifty condition of the roses, marigolds, and jessamine.

I explained that both my horse and I were thirsty.

"If the *mem-sahib* will honor our habitation by descending," he salaamed respectfully, "the *ayah* will attend to her, while I promise that the horse shall receive every care."

"How does it come that so deserted a place can boast of an *ayah* and a *mali*?" I inquired of the ancient woman who immediately presented herself.

"Ah, *mem-sahib*, we have been here these twenty-five years, taking care of the old place—just taking care of the old place;" and she wiped her eyes with the corner of her *chudder*.

"I am so tired, *ayah*; may I sit down?"

"If the *mem-sahib* would so condescend," she responded eagerly. So in a moment I was ensconced in a large cane chair beneath the jessamine bushes, with the old woman at my feet. At last I was to hear the story of the little house!

"It was twenty-five years ago, *mem-sahib*," she began, "that we came out here—twenty-five years ago. It was lonely in this part of the Doon, but I did not care, for I had my birdling—my *missie baba*! Yes, *mem-sahib*, she was very beautiful, and her voice was like that of a bulbul in spring!

"Her mother died when she was born (we lived then in the big bungalow near the parade-ground), and her father, the *bara sahib*, employed me to take care of the motherless one. I was her wet-nurse first, and then, when my own baby died, I stayed on as *ayah* for the little miss. The doctor had given her up, *mem-sahiba*, but I saved her!" And the old woman folded her arms triumphantly across her withered breasts that had been life-giving once, years ago! "She loved me also, *mem-sahibje*, she was mine indeed, for had I not cheated death of her? The *sahib* noticed her sometimes, but not often; he mourned and mourned for the *mem-sahib*, her mother.

"We were grand folk in those days, *mem-sahibje*, and the *sahib* was invited out to many *barra khannas* [big dinners], but he always refused to go, and gradually people forgot him.

"Sometimes the ladies whom we met on the parade-ground would

ask me to show them my baby, and they would kiss her and hand her back to me and say, 'A beautiful child, *ayah*! What a pity the *sahib* is bringing her up so badly!'

"That made me weep bitterly, and finally I spoke to the *sahib*. 'Behold, your lordship, your lordship's daughter is growing up, six years old; she should go to school with the lady-log. I will speak to the *mem* at the Mission Ka-Iskul, if I am granted permission.'

"The *sahib* said, 'Is she indeed so old? Is she *only* so old? Is it not a hundred years since the light went out of my life?'

"But he let me do as I thought best, *mem-sahib*, and I made arrangements with the mission ladies for my lambkin to go to the Mission Ka-Iskul. The *padri's mem* cried when I told her about my little miss, and came to see the *sahib*, who gave her money so that she might buy the Miss *Sahib's* clothes and send her away. For nine months every year I gave up the apple of my eye; but when she would come home in the winter, so clever, I was so glad and proud that I forgot the bitter darkness of the nine long months when the light of the sun had been withheld from me. She would come dancing into the house, throw her arms around me, and kiss me. She always brought me some gift. These beads, *mem-sahib*, and these anklets and bracelets"—touching them tenderly—"are all from her—my little miss.

"She used to tell me about the wonderful things she learned. My heart would become as wax when she explained about the big seas down Bombay way; and the stars, and about the Christian's God. *Mem-sahiba*, that was the most terrible of all! It seems that there is a great fiery pit where wicked people are to be burned forever and ever! My Miss *Sahib* told me all about it—and how careful she would have to be!

"*'Ayah*, I want you to be good and get to heaven. You must, dear *ayah*!'

 and she would kiss me and love me.

"I would laugh and pat her head. It was hard for me to understand—these many paths out into the unknown!

"One day the *sahib* called me into his study. He was very white, and he sat there with a letter in his hand.

"*'Ayah*,' he said, 'I have just heard from the principal of the school where the Miss *Sahib* goes. She says that the child has done so well that she ought to be sent to England.'

"My bones turned to water within me. Sent to England! My birdling sent to England!

"'But, *ayah*,' he went on, and his face became even whiter, 'I have no money. The British government has given me my dismissal, and there is almost nothing left.'

"Then the *sahib* put his head down on the desk and sobbed, as a broken man may.

"All the servants had known what was coming. The *sahib* had been

taking opium for many months. The cook had already left, and the others were going.

"I fell on my knees before him, and begged him to let me stay with him and look after my little *missie baba*; but he did not seem to hear me, and by and by I saw that he was very ill. He could neither move nor speak.

"Then I ran out and sent for the doctor *sahib*, who came and helped us to lay the sick man on a bed. Then the doctor sent a *tar Khabar* [telegram] to the Miss *Sahib*. By nightfall my birdling was with us again.

"She had become a woman, *mem-sahibje*, a lovely woman. Only sixteen, and so wise! She went through her father's accounts and settled everything—all his debtors and creditors went to her, while her father lay and stared and stared at the wall. Sometimes his lips would move, but we were never able to make out a word.

"Among those who came to the house to see the Miss *Sahib* about her father's debts was Rugbir Singh. Ah, *mem-sahib*, a lion among men! He was the son of one of the richest natives in the city; he had been sent to England to be educated. Yes, he was very fair. Handsome? Ah, if the *mem* could only have seen him! Six feet tall, with the shoulders of a god! And his eyes! Ah, when those eyes looked at a woman, *mem-sahib*, they burned two holes through her breast! He had been married young, and had three wives in his *zenana*, but he did not care much for them, and was always looking, looking, for something he had never found. He played cricket and polo a great deal with the *sahib log*, for they liked him. He was a sight to restore the blind when he rode on his pony after the ball in the polo game, the end of his turban fluttering victoriously!

"I am an old woman, but even now I do not wonder that when my Miss *Sahib* first saw him she stood as if turned to stone; for as he looked at her his eyes seemed to send out flames that pierced her breast and wrapped themselves about her heart. That was the moment of their nuptials, *mem-sahib*. The gods had made them one!

"She gave him her eyes for an instant, and then she stepped forward. 'Will you see my father?' she asked. His only answer was, 'You!'

"I had learned to understand English, though I was never so impudent as to speak it, and I made up my mind that I would protect my little mistress. But when the gods arrange matters, who are men that they should strive? I strove—but to what purpose?

"He went into the room and helped her lift her father into a more comfortable position; then, after talking a little business with her, and looking at her a great deal, while the color came and went in her cheeks, he left her, and as he went I saw him kiss her hand.

"All evening she sat near her father, with the hand that had been

kissed next her heart. What could I do? I was always there—that was all; but he was always there also, and as the *sahib* was deeply in his debt, no one could send him away.

"After three weeks the *sahib* died, and the Miss *Sahib* was left, so they said, with nothing at all. I had saved a hundred rupees, and went and dug them out of the ground and gave them to the little miss.

"The day after the funeral people began to come. A *mem* came from the cantonments and said that she would take my Missie *Sahib* as her nurse, only she must come without pay, just at first. Oh, *mem-sahib*, *mem-sahib*, I could have spat upon her for wanting my little lady to do *ayah ka-kam* [*ayah's* work]. Then the *padri's mem* came and said:

"My dear child, accept the situation, by all means. It may be your salvation. You are too young and pretty to be alone in a world full of pitfalls for the unwary, and you must never see Rugbir Singh again!"

"My Miss *Sahib* turned very pale, and she looked at her and said, 'Why?'

"Because, my dear, he has three wives already, and you are a lady, while he is only a native."

"After the *padri's mem* had left her, Rugbir came, and my little Miss *Sahib* told him with white lips that she would have to ask him to stop coming, because people were talking about her, and—and——

"Then he stopped her, *mem-sahib*. He took her in his arms and kissed her as a man might kiss a woman he has thirsted for since time began. She put her head on his shoulder and said that she would give up the world for him.

"My poor little Missie *baba*! How little she knew what giving up the world meant!

"*Hai, hai*, it was to be, *mem-sahib*, it was to be! They were mated before the gods; their eyes met and melted into one. He would look and look at her as if she were his lost self. He looked at her, *mem-sahib*, as women dream of being looked at, and as so few men ever look. His eyes were little points of light, touching, boring, gripping down into her soul. He would talk to her, his arm around her, telling her wild, delicious things that sent little shudders through her. She had never heard such things—so few women ever do!

"Well, *mem-sahib*, they tried to get married. They went to every *padri sahib* in the valley, asking to be married, but the *padri sahibs* would become very angry, and say:

"How dare you think of such an iniquitous thing? It is impossible to marry a Christian girl to a heathen—a wretched native, with three wives already!"

"Then my Miss *Sahib* spoke up: 'If I were a *Sikh*, could I marry him, and be his legal wife?'

" 'Yes—according to law.'

" 'Well, in that case, why can I not marry him now? I cannot become a *Sikh*, for I believe in the Christians' God. I am a Christian.'

" 'You are a wicked woman,' said the *padri sahib*, 'and no Christian at all. Live with him, girl, if you want to—at the peril of your soul.'

"The ladies, none of them, spoke to her; nobody came to see her; and Rugbir Singh's wives in the city were just as angry as the white ladies. You see, Rugbir never went near them any more.

"Then, after a month or so of dreadful misery in the station, her lover brought her out here. The house was an old canal bungalow, and he enlarged it for her use. They were very happy for a while. He would come home to her in the evening, and she would run to meet him; then they would walk down the paths together, while he picked the roses for her. She taught him to play hide-and-seek about the jessamine bushes, and he would catch her. Ah, *mem-sahib*, those two were very near paradise in those days.

"Then, one evening, when he met her he saw that she had been crying. He took her down through the garden until they reached the well, and she sat there with her hand in his. At last she told him. Ah, ah, she was so young, my lambkin. Love had come to her as he comes to few, but she had to pay, *mem-sahib*, she had to pay! We all do." The old crone wiped her eyes with her withered hand.

"Well, she told him, and I, listening back of the jessamine bushes, heard her with wonder.

" 'You see,' she said, 'as long as it was only you and I, it did not matter, but now, Rugbir, my dear, my dear, there is going to be somebody else: a nameless, fatherless child. For its sake, can you not give me your name? For its sake, darling! These people, yours and mine, will be as cruel to it as they are to me. Rugbir, make its path easier!'

"Then he kissed her—he ate her up with his eyes! He told her that he would sell his soul for her—that he would marry her. Surely in all India there must be some one who would marry them! He would go out of the Doon and fetch a *padri*, and his heart's delight, his own, would be herself once more. So they planned it all, sitting there on the curb of the well. By and by she put her head back on his shoulder, and together they watched the moon rise, while he kissed her fingers one by one, and then—her mouth.

"Ah, *mem-sahib*, I have had three husbands, but love such as that never touched me! As I watched them, my heart burned within me, and I called upon my gods to protect her, that she might not pay the full price of such happiness.

"I watched my lady very carefully those days, for Rugbir's three wives were very angry. I said nothing about it, but twice I found that

poison had been put in her drinking water. Always I tested it upon the kittens we kept about the place. Once I killed a cobra in her bath-room. I feared for my lady, I feared—how I feared!

"Finally, Rugbir decided that he must go to Saharunpur. He had heard that there was a native Christian *padri* there who might be persuaded to marry them. I suppose, *mem-sahib*, that he meant to make it well worth the fellow's while. He was going to be gone three days to fetch him.

"How happy and light-hearted my little mistress was when he left! She ran about, arranging the furniture and picking flowers. It was all going to be right, she said, at last.

"I was to sleep in the house, to be near her, but after I ate my dinner that night I fell asleep on the floor of my hut. The other servants had the same thing happen to them. We had all been heavily drugged—two of the men died.

"The first thing of which I was conscious was Rugbir bending over me, pouring cold water on my face, and brandy down my throat, saying:

"*'Ayah, ayah, wake up! Where—where is the mem-sahib?'*

"*'Hai, hai!'*" and the old woman beat upon her breast, "from that day to this there has never been any sign of our hearts' delight. A rumor spread in the city that she herself, wearying of Rugbir, had sent him away, and drugged us all, in order to have a chance to escape to England with a colonel *sahib* who used to admire her when her father was living.

"But we, her lord and I, knew differently. We hunted for her everywhere. He even searched the well. There was no sign or sound. For days he was like one mad. With outstretched arms, he walked the garden-paths, crying, 'My beloved, my beloved, where art thou?'

"He almost expected to have her suddenly appear behind some bush, and put her little hands over his eyes, whispering, 'Lord of my life, who is it?'

"Within two months his hair and beard were white as snow, and they said in the city that he was mad. His wives wanted him to go back to them, but he never did, and they died without seeing him. The last one was buried only five days ago. They did say that in her delirium—it was cholera—she seemed to see an apparition, and screamed over and over again, 'Take her away, take her away! Who let her out?' What could she have meant, *mem-sahib*?

"My master has paid me to watch here all these years. He comes but seldom now. It grieves him so, he says. He is to be here to-day, for the outside bedroom wall has begun to give way, and the workmen are to tear down part of it, in order to repair it properly. I think I hear them now, *mem-sahib*, on the other side of the house. Let us go and see."

I rose, glad to change my position after listening to the old woman's story; and glad also to brush away some tears that had risen unbidden to my eyes. She was moaning, "*Hai, hai*," as grief-stricken eastern women do, when we took the path leading around to the deserted bedroom. Several coolies were there, two or three working with pick-axes under the direction of a majestic-looking native gentleman, a Sikh with white eyebrows and snow-white beard. Surely, Rugbir himself!

The *ayah* was commencing to salaam when suddenly her arm was arrested. What was that—that thing within the wall? Bricks and plaster had been removed, and there in the aperture was *something*, a bit of cloth—terrible! I reeled with sick horror. A skeleton within the wall. Some one had been built up years ago. A bony hand protruded. Upon one finger was a ring placed there with solemn vows by Rugbir Singh when he was young.

The wall trembled, the ring slipped off and rolled to Rugbir's feet. He picked it up, looked at it dazed, then, shrieking, "My heart's delight, thou hast come back to me!" fell prostrate.

There was a terrible crash, and the whole wall crumbled to earth, covering the senseless man. Amidst the wild din of falling masonry and the uproar of human voices I heard the old *ayah's* shrieks:

"She has paid, she has paid—to the full!"



RAPTURE

BY GEORGE PLATT WALLER, JR.

ODORS and Music and Stars,
And the Cup of the Springtide is full,
For the dawning of Night has loosened the bars
Which prisoned the pasture of stampeding stars
Ranged in the sign of the Bull.

Molten notes like honey-drops slow
Drip from the musical hive
Where the mocking-bird labors all night in the snow
Of the crab-apple blossoms whose odors all go
Into music—pulsant—alive.

Odors and Music and Stars,
And the cup of my joy overflows
In the scent of your tresses; and envious Mars
Glowes at your voice, but your eyes pique the stars,
And they wink at us under the rose.

HELD UP

By Thomas L. Masson

KOYTE, engaged to the richest girl in the State, was supremely happy.

Not necessarily because she was rich, but because he loved her. They were to be married to-morrow.

For several weeks before a man is actually married—especially when he is marrying a very popular girl—he is more or less of a nonentity. But upon this eve of the ceremony there had come a lull. Everything had been arranged; everybody was waiting; and she had telephoned him to come up and see her and to have, as she expressed it, “a quiet half-hour all to themselves.”

She came into the room almost breathlessly a moment after Koyte himself had entered in obedience to her summons.

“Is n’t it grand, Jack?” she said. “Just look at what Papa has given us for a wedding present!”

She showed him a check on the First National Bank for fifty thousand dollars, made out to her order.

Jack Koyte was himself by no means a poor man, his father having long held a very comfortable berth in one of the largest trust companies; but he staggered a little at the sight of the check.

“That’s splendid, Margy!” he exclaimed. “The governor has always been good to you, has n’t he? But, then, we really did n’t need it. You know,” he added proudly, “I can always support you, although possibly I may not have as much——”

She put the check over his lips.

“Don’t say another word, Jack,” she said. “It’s all right. We’ll take this money and put it away for a rainy day. You had better take it yourself. Here.”

She ran over to the desk and wrote her name on the back and handed it to him.

“You take it,” she said, “and put it in the bank. I don’t know anything about those things; and you had better have charge of it.”

Jack Koyte hesitated. He felt diffident about accepting the responsibility. She saw his embarrassment and anticipated it.

“Don’t worry,” she said. “I will ask you for it again; but I’m so

excited about this whole affair that I don't want to think about that just now. I've had an awful time with the bridesmaids. You know the colors did n't match, and at the last moment——"

Koyte stopped her with a kiss. For him there was more important business than the details of a wedding ceremony, which he regarded from his man's point of view as being entirely superfluous, any way. Besides, his time was short.

An hour later he walked up the steps of his own home. Everything was quiet inside. He went upstairs to his room for a moment, and then came down again. He heard voices in the library. He recognized them. He entered.

His father and his mother were sitting together somewhat closer than usual, and talking in low voices. Jack, absorbed in his own happiness, did n't notice anything unusual. He did n't see that his father's head was slightly bent.

"Well, what do you think?" he exclaimed. "Maybe Margy's governor has n't done the handsome thing! By Jove, I can't get over it! Of course I knew he would give Margy a nice present; but just look at this!"

He threw the check down on the table.

His father turned his head quickly and his eye fastened on the check. Then he looked at Jack, who for the first time suddenly realized that something had happened.

"What's up?"

Jack's mother spoke.

"Something terrible," she said quietly. "You had better tell him, Arthur," she said, as she turned to her husband.

Jack looked at them wonderingly. He had never seen such a look upon his father's face.

"I am ruined," said the old man.

"Ruined?"

"Yes. And that is n't the worst of it either. I've disgraced you all."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I got involved in a deal the other day. It was a put-up job. I can see it now that it is over. At any rate, I used some of the bank's funds, and I could n't make good. To-morrow morning they are bound to discover it, and it will be all over."

"Is it true?" asked Jack, looking at his mother.

"Yes. Your father tried to keep it from me when he came home; but——"

"I could n't," said the old man.

He went on, slowly telling the details of the transaction. Jack listened mechanically. He was so paralyzed with the news that he had n't recovered his faculties. But when his father had finished he said:

"Does any one know about this?"

"Not a living soul except you and your mother."

"But don't some of the directors suspect it? Is n't Margy's father on the board?"

"Yes; but it would be impossible for anybody to know about it, as the loss is n't even suspected. But to-morrow afternoon the papers will contain everything. I can see the head-lines now."

So could Jack.

There was a silence.

The old gentleman nervously moved his hands back and forth and twitched his chair. His eyes wandered. Suddenly they went down on the check that Jack had placed upon the table. It was upside down. He saw an endorsement. He straightened up a little and looked at his son.

"Did she endorse that check to you?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What's the amount?"

"Fifty thousand."

There was another silence.

The great ormolu clock over the mantel ticked solemnly.

At last Jack spoke.

"How much would pull you out of this hole, Dad?" he asked.

"Fifty thousand."

The old man turned and looked at him steadily for half a minute. Only for an instant did his gaze relax, when it rested rather furtively upon the face of his wife. Then he said:

"I don't suppose you could get married, Jack, after this thing comes out. You see, we can't keep it longer than to-morrow morning, when the exchange opens. Had you thought of that?"

"Yes."

Jack looked at his mother.

She got up.

Jack had seen the same look upon her face when, during his boyhood, she had had occasion to punish him; or when she had discharged some servant.

"Well, it's a good thing I was here!" she said sharply. "I declare, if you men are not all alike! You have n't got any more courage than a couple of scarecrows. I actually believe you would have done it!"

Her husband looked at her, his hand trembling slightly as it lay on the arm of the chair. His aristocratic old face began to show reproach.

"Now, Mary," he protested feebly, "you know perfectly well that I had no such thought."

"Nonsense! You don't suppose I have lived with you all these years without knowing you. You always did have a weak spot in you, any way. Now, you would have taken that check and used the money and saved yourself. But you, Jack——"

She held up her finger at her son.

"I had expected better things of you. You would have let your father use that money and help him out so you could get married to-morrow."

Jack's blood began to mount to his face. He had a strain of his mother's temper.

"Mother," he exclaimed, "you have no right to say a thing like that! Of course I should n't have done anything of the sort! Absurd! Preposterous!"

His mother went up to him and put her arms about him.

"Do you suppose, my boy," she said, "that I don't know what you are? Have n't I been fighting that particular thing in you all your life? Oh my! but I'm glad I caught your father when he came home to-night and got it out of him! If you two had met without me—well——"

"But what do you expect me to do?" said Jack defiantly.

She took up the check, folded it carefully, and handed it back to him.

"You go right back to Margy, return this check to her, and tell her the truth. Then if she wants to marry you——"

Their eyes met.

Jack took the check and sidled out of the door. He went down the steps to the corner, got a taxicab, and in fifteen minutes was ringing the door-bell at Margy's house. It was nearly midnight, and he had to wait. But at last she came—an animated interrogation-point.

"What is the matter?" she said.

"I came to bring you back this check. My father is mixed up in a financial transaction, and the whole thing will be disclosed to-morrow. We shall unquestionably be disgraced, and I've come to explain the whole thing to you so that you won't have to marry me. I simply *had* to do it to-night."

In reply, Margy went up to him and put her arms about his neck.

"You silly old thing!" she said. "Don't you suppose we knew all about that? Father found it out. That's the reason he gave me the check and told me to turn it over to you. You see, he's one of the directors, and he realizes that it was n't your father's fault; but of course he had to save him at this critical moment."

Jack straightened himself up. The same look of reproach came over his face that his father had displayed a short time before toward his mother. His voice rang stern.

"You don't think there are any circumstances under which I would accept that check, do you?" he said. "I would die first! How can you think such a thing?"

Margy laughed.

"Well, of course I knew you would n't," she replied, "because I have such faith in you; but, to save my life, Jack, I could n't tell you the truth! I was just dying to see how you would act under such circumstances."

THE STRATEGY OF HEZEKIAH JOHN

By Clara Odell Lyon

IN the matter of nomenclature, Mrs. Gibbs was strictly just. "The first boy named after your father and mine, John; the first girl, after your mother and mine—a name from each family," she had said to her husband. So when the initial baby made its appearance the naming of her was quickly accomplished. The same impartiality was shown with the two succeeding daughters, Mrs. Gibbs being not at all disturbed by the strange combinations resulting from sentimentalism on the one side and religion on the other. She liked to do things easily, and what method could be simpler than the one she had chosen? Why, she had known some people worry a full six months over finding a suitable name for a child—as if it mattered! She shortened Pearl Hepzibah, Cordelia Mary, and Arethusa Ruth to Leppy, Cormy, and Thuser—reserving the long names for greater force in maternal speakings-to—and was satisfied.

When the longed-for boy arrived, however, Mrs. Gibbs decided that he must bear the full weight of his name, Hezekiah John, and even in his earliest infancy she never spoke to him in any other way.

Not so Leppy, the ten-year-old sister. She crooned pet-names in his ear when she rocked him to sleep; she turned a threatening twist of rosy lip into a smile with her terms of endearment, and lavished on the baby love-words without stint. Perhaps that is why, at six months, Hezekiah John's little fists went out at sight of Leppy, and his bobbing head could find no comfortable place to cuddle for a nap save in the small crook of Leppy's arm.

He was a satisfactory baby—most tractable. At Leppy's request, he never refused to "pat-a-cake," or "show-how-big-you-are," or point with his dumpling finger to his dab of a nose. And his readiness to perform these infantile accomplishments, as well as his bright blue eyes, round cheeks of delicious pink and white, and his curly fuzz of golden hair, made him beyond a doubt the show-baby of the tenement.

Leppy's pride in him was without measure. So sure was she of his undisputed first place, that she could and did, when occasion offered, praise the small charges of her friends.

"Nice thick hair, Willy 's got," she would remark condescendingly to Mamie Wibben, knowing full well that straight, heavy black locks on a nine-months child offer no comparison to ringlets of gold.

Or to Maggie Martin of the great infant struggling in her arms, "Ain't he strong, though!" To which Maggie, who found small matter of pride or comfort in the wriggling twenty pounds, would reply:

"Ain't he! He 'll be walking soon, and I 'll be glad. He can stand alone now by a chair."

Next to Hezekiah John in Leppy's affections came Miss Adams, the teacher of the fourth grade. She stood to the little girl for all that was lovely and good in womanhood.

"When I grow up I 'm going to be just like Miss Adams," she often told herself, and even at eleven she began to copy her in matters of dress, showing one day a very stubborn preference, as her mother thought, for a piece of blue serge over the bright plaid selected for her. But when first she wore the sober dress, Leppy was raised to a delirium of delight to have Miss Adams remark:

"You look like my little sister to-day."

Being a sympathetic teacher, Miss Adams knew much about Hezekiah John. From September, when he was but four months old, all through the school year, she learned of his advancement in the arts of babyhood. New teeth, his successful wrestlings with colic and croupy colds, his first "luh, luh"—abbreviations for Leppy, without a doubt—were all promptly reported to her for congratulation. She knew, too, of the comparative slowness of the other tenement infants, and how "the heavy lump of a Martin baby" had not a single endearing trick to commend him. Yes, Miss Adams heard and was interested, and after some particularly good bit of news would say, "I *must* come to see that baby some day." Then Leppy would float off in a cloud of happiness, from which she could see, as in a dream, a rosy gold-ringed cherub doing wonderful feats before a wondering and admiring teacher, while about stood the other small nurses with their respective charges, who would of course receive *some* attention—Miss Adams not being given to hurting any one's feelings—but——

One Friday afternoon, as the children were passing out, Miss Adams laid a detaining hand on Leppy's shoulder.

"Leppy dear, will you and the baby be at home a week from tomorrow? I think perhaps I will come to see you and some of the other little girls in your house."

"Oh, yes, 'm, we'll be home," answered Leppy, her eager, flushed face showing Miss Adams how welcome she would be.

"I want to see Hezekiah John, you know. I have n't heard any-

thing of that wonderful baby for quite a while. I suppose he's walking, too. Maggie's baby took several steps yesterday, she told me. Are n't they cunning when they first learn to toddle!" went on Miss Adams innocently.

"Yes'm," stammered the child again.

"Well, good-by, dear," smiled the teacher. And Leppy went off, her joy drowned in the fierce waves of jealousy that surged through her. Hezekiah John could not take a step—not a step—and that Martin baby—that—that dumb, stupid, lumpy baby that never could do a *thing*—was walking! And Miss Adams had said they looked so cunning when they toddled. A great determination seized her. Before the week was out Hezekiah John should *learn* to toddle.

It was a hard week for the baby. To begin with, his sister developed a surprising firmness and a remarkable inconsistency of behavior. It commenced when she stood him by a chair, and after he had with considerable difficulty acquired a comfortable balance, so that he could amuse himself with the cord of the cushion, she immediately pushed the chair a little, so that the balancing had to be done all over again. And this she repeated at frequent intervals the whole of one day, paying no attention to the many beseeching looks he sent her. His legs were tired, oh, so tired, when night came, but he was glad, thinking of the next day, that the balancing was becoming less difficult.

But the next day brought new trials. Leppy stood him alone in a corner. And when he remained there, sweet and obedient, she frowned. If he slid to the floor, he was immediately jerked—yes, jerked—up again. If he made ready to cry at this unkind treatment on the part of his Leppy, she would show that her love for him was still unchanged, by producing a cracker or a lump of sugar.

Once he was so tired he could endure it no longer, especially with his sister and a peppermint stick a few feet away. He tried to come out of the corner where Leppy seemed determined to keep him, and took a step in her direction—when, to his surprise, she seized him and covered him with kisses, as though she was glad to have him in her arms again. Very foolish of her, when all she had to do was to pick him up and be happy.

After various experiments, Hezekiah John found out that leaving the corner, not by sliding to the floor and creeping out, but by making a lunge in the direction of his sister, was invariably rewarded; and matters then became considerably easier for both of them. For, as stated before, Hezekiah was a tractable baby, and when he found that Leppy preferred three or four steps to two, before he tumbled, he tried to do as she desired, and even succeeded in a few days' time in taking five.

Miss Adams's sense of self-importance, if she had any, would have been much gratified, could she have known of Leppy's preparations for her coming. Mrs. Gibbs had a business engagement which took her from home every Saturday, so her eldest daughter was left in charge, and from early morning till noon Leppy cleaned—the floor, the windows, the little girls, and herself. The baby's scrubbing was left to the last minute; and just as the clock struck two—Miss Adams having thoughtfully set an exact time for her visit at quarter past—Leppy thrust Hezekiah John's fat arms through the sleeves of his best white dress, and his fat feet into a pair of new shoes, which were her crowning achievement, the purchase of which had required the greatest diplomacy on her part. Then, with the baby held tightly in her arms, she took her place at the window to watch for teacher's coming.

Scarcely less excited were the little sisters, who hardly waited to announce, "Here she comes!" before they were off and down the stairs, that they might lose as little as possible of the happenings of the day. As Miss Adams made her ascent from apartment to apartment, they made flying and breathless trips to report their observations to the waiting Leppy.

Mrs. Ellerhorst had on her new dress. Willy Martin was wearing Freda's locket, but his dress was n't *near* so nice as Hezekiah John's. Teacher had a thing you take pictures with—yes, and an umbrella with a silver handle. The Martin baby walked all the way from the table to the door to meet the teacher—and she *kissed* him.

Leppy listened with complacency. And indeed Hezekiah John fully justified his sister's faith in him. He was a model of infantile behavior, and Miss Adams was fervent in his praise, warming Leppy's heart to the very core.

"And now let me see him walk. Or no, can't we take him up on the roof? I want to take his picture, and must have strong sunlight."

Miss Adams picked up the heavy baby, who settled down contentedly in her arms, and followed the guidance of the three little girls to the broad flat roof of the tenement. Here Hezekiah John was put down in a sort of corner in an irregularly built chimney.

"I must take a picture of him walking," said Miss Adams. "He has done everything else—and now for his latest accomplishment."

It was a great moment. The baby poised, ready, against the chimney; Leppy, expectant, a few feet away to the right; Miss Adams, all attention, to the left.

Leppy held out her arms invitingly.

"Come, honey-bun," she enticed. "Come to your Leppy." Honey-bun smiled and wriggled his little body on his turned-in toes.

"Oh, wait till I fix his feet," and Leppy sprang to correct this defect in arrangement. The small squares of patent leather were turned duly

out, as offering a better balance to a diminutive person of instability, and Leppy crawled hopefully back to her former position.

"Come, sweetness, come get the candy sister's got." But neither the saccharine appellation nor the saccharine offering moved Hezekiah John.

Miss Adams purred her entreaties, too, but all were unavailing.

Well did Hezekiah John know what was expected of him; but he knew, too, the impossibility of success. It was a strange world! Why, if Leppy wanted him to walk—why had she put stiff new shoes on his feet, when every one knows that walking is the hardest thing a baby has to do? Better no attempt than an ignominious failure.

Now, Hezekiah John had one accomplishment of which Leppy had never taken much account. A pucker of lips with the lower thrust out, and a sudden wrinkling of his face, meant tears, and tears argued unhappiness; but, nevertheless, there never was a baby who could send out a curl of rosy lip with a whimper so deliciously as Hezekiah John.

It was all that remained to him to do, and he would do it as best he could. The only way to end the torture was to cry. The rough chimney walls were giving way beneath his outspread palms; the smooth floor beneath his slippery shoes. He raised one patent-leathered foot in protest, a curve of dewy red shelved out, and Hezekiah John's face puckered in an adorable whimper. Then he sat down very suddenly, and gave vent to an expression of grieved and abused babyhood.

But not before Miss Adams had seized her black box and snapped it at him; not before Leppy, her heart bursting with wounded pride, broke down and cried. Then, to her amazement, she heard her teacher's voice, laughing in delight, and Hezekiah John's answering gurgle. Truly, it is a strange world! Leppy thought so. The same thing, too, had sometimes occurred to Miss Adams.

"Oh, Leppy, this *adorable* baby! You did n't see him, did you? Never was anything so utterly dear. I got his picture, Leppy. I'm going to use it for the article I'm writing. In a magazine, you know—his picture in a magazine."

Miss Adams was in an abandonment of joy. She was sitting on the roof, hugging and jumping the gurgling baby, who crowed and kicked his feet, now liberated from the offending shoes.

"They hurt him so, the darling, no wonder he could n't walk. Here, dear, he wants you."

She balanced Hezekiah John on his crumpled cotton feet, and the baby without more ado took two steps and fell into Leppy's lap—a lesser triumph swallowed up in the greater.

Hezekiah John that night was rocked to sleep by a happy Leppy.

"Just think, lovey dear, to be in a book some day—your picture in a book!"

Hezekiah John gazed into his sister's face with knowing eyes; a knowing smile was on his baby lips.

"Oh, honey-bun," exclaimed Leppy in sudden enlightenment, "I believe, I do believe, you did it all on purpose!"



THE NEIGHBOR

BY MARGUERITE O. B. WILKINSON

HE set his hand to the plow one day,
While yet his years were few,
Resolved to mark a distant field
With furrows firm and true.
His arms were strong for the toil of life,
His heart was all afire,
Till a neighbor laughed, and turned him home,
Rebuking his desire:

"You are too young, you are too poor, you are too weak," said he.
"Best leave such tasks to the rich and great, and strive to be
like me!"

Then rosy Love brought grand largesse
To his very cottage door,
A maid of mystery and of charm
God never gave before;
And the lad held out dumb hands of Hope
To the mighty fires of Peace,
Till the neighbor passed with tongue in cheek,
And then he sought release.

"You are too dull," the neighbor said, "to shine by such as she.
"Find you a girl of common clay to wed, and be like me!"

So time sped by, till the fading day
Could bring but one last chance
To break the bonds of a sordid life
And conquer Circumstance;
And, well-nigh spent, he sought the road
To the heights where life is great,
Eager to reach one shining goal,
But his neighbor whispered, "Wait—

You are too old to do it now—it is far too late," said he.
"I could not do it myself, you know, and you are just like me!"

SHORT-STORY MASTERPIECES

SECOND SERIES—RUSSIAN

VI. THE SNOW-STORM

By Alexander Sergyevitch Pushkin

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY JOHN COURNOS, AND WITH
INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

PUSHKIN AND THE NEW ERA

ALEXANDER SERGYEVITCH PUSHKIN was born in Moscow, June 7, 1799, at a time when Russia was aswirl with various currents. Therefore, to gain some clear vision of the distinguished service which he rendered the literature of his native land, we must at least glance at the great intellectual and political tides—they were largely coincident—which swept Russia, first away from her own self-sufficient life, then toward France, next in the direction of Germany, and finally out into a national thought-channel of her own.

Pushkin is one of those writers who are big enough to have founded and dominated an era, not solely because of his own preëminent genius, but for the deeper reason that he represented in himself the culmination of a series of national steps, each as definite as it was important.

For all the centuries of her life up to the nineteenth, Russia had lived a separate existence from that of her great neighbors. In seeking a cause for this condition, we must remember that the imperial bigness of Russia, and her remote location, are not the only factors entering into her segregate character. The *great* factor is that Russia is much more largely Asiatic in spirit than it is European. The typical Slav of to-day is, temperamentally, though not in a precise sense racially, a mixture of Tartar fierceness, old Slavonic stolidity, and Hindu *Nirvana*, which, being translated into Russian, is essentially Nihilism. Yet, to-day as for many centuries, the Slavic race is as truly homogeneous as any can be.

During this long era of Russia's ultra-exclusiveness, the polished periods of Montaigne and the brilliant dramas of Corneille, Racine, and Molière were delighting France, and Spenser, Milton, and Dryden were doing rare things for English literature. At the same time, nationally unconscious of all this, Russia was singing its epical and ballad folk-songs, with only now and then a note of premeditated art sounding

forth. Here indeed was a true poetry of the people—which, as Dr. Gummere has pointed out, is a very different thing from that pseudo-folk-poetry which is merely *about* the people. Still, it required influences from without to bring Russian literature to artistic national expression.

The great autocratic rulers of Russia, and her leading nobles, at last began to feel the allurements of the French, and Peter the Great even travelled abroad, coming home imbued with new ideas for a progressive nation. When a giant people, long content to be sufficient unto itself, awakens to see that other ideals of life, other habits of thought, other standards of conduct, have brought other great nations to a brilliancy of position which its own solitary bigness has not enabled it to attain, the first feeling is one of contempt for "those others," as the French would say. Later, comes a naïve passion to imitate. And finally, enter a whole train of foreign influences, good and bad.

So it was with Russia after the powerful, rough, and somewhat benevolently autocratic reign of Catherine II, at whose court Pushkin's father was a complacent noble. The French tongue, which even Pushkin himself called "the language of Europe," already prevailed at the Russian court, and the literature of the country consisted chiefly of imitations of the pseudo-classical French school, adaptations, or even translations, from other languages, and here and there a struggling voice which lifted itself with difficulty above the imitative clack. All three of these types Catherine herself fostered—intermittently, though still with some success.

But the alarming revolutionary ideas bruited from France, and the Napoleonic campaign against Russia, caused a powerful revulsion of feeling toward Germany and away from France. In Germany, however, Young Russia met the same humanistic tendencies and passion for free thought with which France had been gradually impregnating the empire of the Slavs. Add to this the influence of Byron's poetry, now stirring Europe, and we have the external forces which drove Russia to look at her own self with honest eyes—forces which at length found their literary climax in Pushkin's giving to his native land a literature which was of the Russians, for the Russians, and by a Russian—a literature born of the Russian spirit, breathing her ideals, speaking her marvellously expressive tongue in new combinations of beauty, and set against a background of her soil and her cities.

A further remarkable influence was operating to prepare both Russia and Pushkin for the work of new creation: in the hands of Zhukovski and others who immediately preceded our author, the Russian language began suddenly to assume a flexibility and richness which, as I have intimated, was destined to be still more greatly enlarged by the gifts of Pushkin.

The author-to-be wasted no time beginning his career. Even at the

age of ten, while an unstudious but omnivorously reading school-boy, he made deft imitations of French verse and the French drama, while at twelve he knew four or five languages and was reading Rousseau, Voltaire, and Molière with avidity. At this age the lad became a pupil in the College Tsarskoïé-Siélo, in 1811, the year of its founding by Alexander I. But while he absorbed enough to cause his wild genius to flourish, he was incorrigible, and always in hot-water—except among his comrades, by whom his dash, impudence, and wit made him to be both admired and feared.

When Pushkin was only fifteen, the *European Messenger* published anonymously a series of clever but obscene Russian verses in the style of Ossian and Parny. The name of the author soon leaked out, however, and when the following year the boy read on a public speech-day a suitable poem entitled "Recollections of Tsarskoïé-Siélo," he was hailed as a gifted poet. The poetic form was miraculous—the thought, just about what a lad could produce.

In 1817 Pushkin was graduated, and entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At once he was lionized by literary society, and became the leader of a brilliant but rakish clique—the story of their escapades would read like a tenderloin police-docket. At length, in 1820, the year when "Ruslan and Lyudmila," his first great poem, was published, he committed some folly too outrageous to be condoned—probably an especially licentious expression in verse—and was banished to South Russia, where, wandering among the Caucasus ranges which color all his later work, and living near the romantic Black Sea, he remained for several years; until, in 1824, his banishment was commuted to confinement to his father's estates. In a literary way this date marks the beginning of his new era, for he now began to bring into final form the master-poem, "Eugene Onyegin," on which he had been working for several years—of which more presently.

Some—why, I cannot conceive—have attributed Pushkin's ungovernable disposition to the mixed blood that flowed in his veins, as was the case with the elder Dumas. Pushkin's maternal great-grandfather was that Abram Hannibal, "Peter the Great's Arab favorite," who was really an Abyssinian slave. The African youth was educated in France by his royal master and godfather, later admitted to his friendship, and eventually married to a Russian lady. Their son became a great Russian general. The poet himself bore unmistakable marks of his ancestry in his short curly hair and thick, sensuous lips, though his eyes were blue, his skin fair, and his hair light in hue.

During these earlier years of his short life, Pushkin was profoundly influenced by Byron, and even was willing to be called "the Russian Byron." Indeed, his license-loving and liberty-adoring nature was quite like that of his English model. This influence is seen not only in his

poetic methods, but in his teachings and in his themes. The poem "Poltava," published in 1829, takes Mazeppa for its hero, and his poetic masterpiece, "Eugene Onyegin," published in 1828, is really Don-Juanesque. Nor is it difficult to trace other evidences of this sincerest form of flattery.

Singularly enough, "Eugene Onyegin" (which Tchaikovsky has made the subject of an opera) is at once in the style of Byron (somewhat resembling his "Beppo"), while in theme, locale, and handling it throws off the trammels of Byronism, and indeed all foreignism, and becomes the first really great work of modern Russian literature. Whatever the original debt Pushkin owed to the author of "Don Juan," in this and later work he strikes out with all the self-confidence and attainment of an original genius. So tender, so pathetic, yet so humorous, so full of human understanding, so informed with the spirit of contemporary Russian society, is this remarkable work that its author achieved immortality in its writing. Thus did the years of exile on the paternal manor bear notable fruit.

Because this creation sets so lasting an initial mark, by establishing Russian literature upon a basis of art, it seems worth while to recite its argument here in full.

Eugene Onyegin is a "Byronic young society man," who is recalled to the country from his city dissipations by his father's death. Here he lives, for a long time avoiding all contact with his less cultivated neighbors. A young poet, Vladimir Lensky, the son of one of these manorial families, returns from abroad, and a congenial friendship springs up between the young men. Lensky, who is betrothed to Olga Larin, persuades Onyegin to call upon her family with him. Tatyana, Olga's elder sister, at once falls in love with Onyegin, and writes him a letter of frank avowal—one of the most famous passages of the drama. But Onyegin gently turns her aside by assuming the rôle of a fatherly adviser, and the incident remains unknown to all except themselves and Tatyana's old nurse. Soon afterwards, Lensky induces Onyegin to go to the Larins' on the occasion of Tatyana's Name-day festival. For the sake of preventing gossip in a district given over to small talk, Onyegin yields and goes. At table, by the innocent scheming of her family, he is placed opposite to Tatyana, and finds the situation so embarrassing that he determines to revenge himself on the innocent Lensky by flirting with Olga, who is shortly to become Lensky's wife. During the evening, Olga, pretty but weak-natured, accepts Onyegin's attentions with such interest that Lensky challenges him. Heartsick at the results of his momentary unjust anger, Onyegin would gladly apologize, were it not that Lensky has chosen as his representative an old fire-eater and tattler who would misrepresent his motives and perhaps compromise Tatyana. Therefore, he accepts—and Lensky falls. Onyegin then goes off on his

travels. Olga soon consoles herself with a handsome officer, and after their marriage goes with him to his regiment. Tatyana, however, who is of a reserved, intense character, pines, refuses all offers of marriage, and, by the advice of friends, is finally taken to Moscow for the winter. There, as a wall-flower at her first ball, she captivates a prince from St. Petersburg—a distinguished and socially important general. She follows her parents' wishes and marries him. When Onyegin returns to the capital a few years later, he finds, to his great astonishment, "that the little country girl whom he has patronized, rejected, almost scorned, is one of the great ladies of the court and society." He falls madly in love with her, in his turn, but she gives him not the slightest sign of friendship. Driven to despair by this coldness, he writes her three letters, but she does not reply. Then, entering her boudoir unexpectedly through the carelessness of her servants, he finds her in tears, reading his letter. He again avows his love. She is obliged to confess that she loves him still, but finally makes him understand that she will be true to her kind and high-minded husband.

After the production of his masterpiece, followed a notable poetic tragedy, "Boris Godunov," in which may be discerned the author's admiration for the methods of Shakespeare, to whom he turned, yet not slavishly, after freeing himself from the overshadowing Byron.

It is inevitable that we should speculate upon the splendid work which might have come from the pen of this greatest of Russian poets had he not fallen in his prime. The story is sad and sordid enough. In 1831, having been restored to imperial favor, he had married the beautiful Natalya Nikolaevna Gontcharoff, and they plunged into society, loaded with recognition by the court.

He had been married but five years when society began to gossip about "the lovely Madame Pushkin" and Baron George Hekkeren-Dantes, the natural son of the Dutch minister to Russia. Pushkin attached no blame to his wife for the indiscretions of the infatuated young chevalier of the Guards, but challenged him nevertheless. Dantes averted a meeting by marrying Pushkin's sister. Still the gossip persisted, and eventually, being refused access to the Pushkin home, Dantes made his persecutions so patent, and was so seconded by the elder Hekkeren, that the poet challenged the father. The son intervened, adopted the quarrel, and in a duel at St. Petersburg Pushkin was killed, January 29, 1837, being only thirty-eight years old.

The last six years of Pushkin's life established his claim to greatness not only as a poet and a dramatist, but also as a master of Russian prose. We may not term him a novelist, but as a writer of prose tales he set a new mark in the literature of his land. When we recall that it was in the first years of that significant decade, 1830-1840, that

Poe, Balzac, and Mérimée perfected and brought to its modern form the short-story, we shall realize what a great forward step was being made in Russia at the very same time when Pushkin produced his "Prose Tales." His longer tales, "A Prisoner of the Caucasus" and "The Captain's Daughter," exhibit little plot, but they are notable impressionistic stories, full of rich and effective coloring.

Two of his shorter stories I outline, both on account of their intrinsic interest and for the fact that they illustrate the romantic vein which runs through all of Pushkin's work. Else how could he ever have turned to Byron? Gogol, a contemporary of Pushkin and in some senses his successor, was the father of Russian realism. The two may be said to be the joint parents of Russian fiction.

"The Queen of Spades" is like a "Weird Tale" by Hoffmann, or a conception of Poe's. It ranks as one of the world's great short-stories.

At the house of a cavalry officer, several young Russians are gambling. One of them asks Herman why he never plays. He replies, "Play interests me greatly, but I hardly care to sacrifice the necessities of life for uncertain superfluities."

Tomsky says that he can understand Herman's being economical, but that he cannot understand why his own grandmother, the Countess Anna Fedorovna, should not play, for, although she is eighty years of age, she knows a secret which makes winning at faro certain. Tomsky then goes on to relate how the old woman secured the secret from a friend of hers in order to save her from the disastrous results of enormous losses in cards. The secret consists of choosing three certain cards in succession. This she did, winning every time, and was soon out of debt.

Being in need of funds, Herman is impressed with the story, and begins to haunt the outside of the aged Countess's home. In order to gain admission and learn the secret, he contrives to flirt with Lisaveta Ivanovna, the Countess's ward, who at length arranges a way in which he can gain admission to the house while the family are attending a ball. He is to pass through the Countess's apartments and await the girl in her sitting-room, but instead of doing this, the young officer secretes himself in the apartments of the Countess. After she is in bed he emerges and demands the names of the three cards, placing a pistol at her brow, but assuring her that he means no harm if she will do as he asks. She tremblingly tells him that it was only a jest, that there is nothing in the report of her knowledge, but Herman insists, and after a short time he grasps her arm roughly and is about to renew his threats when he finds that she is dead.

Presently Herman makes his way to Lisaveta's apartment, where he tells her all. She realizes that she is not loved, and discerns the true reason why the young man has sought her acquaintance. However, she helps him to get out of the house safely.

The next night he drinks heavily and throws himself on his bed without undressing. During the night he awakes with a start and sees looking in at the window some one who quickly disappears. Presently he hears the shuffling of loose slippers, the door of his room opens, and a woman in white enters. As she comes close to his bed, the terrified man recognizes the Countess. "I have come to you against my will," she says abruptly, "but I was commanded to grant your request. The trey, the seven, and the ace are the magic cards. Twenty-four hours must elapse after the use of each card, and after the three have been used you must never play again."

The phantom then turns and walks away.

The next night he enters a fashionable gambling club in St. Petersburg, stakes forty thousand rubles, and wins a huge sum. The next night he chooses a seven-spot and wins ninety-four thousand rubles.

The following evening he went again. His appearance was the signal for the cessation of all occupation, every one being eager to watch the developments of events. He selected his card—an ace.

The dealing began: to the right, a queen; to the left, an ace.

"The ace wins," remarked Herman, turning up his card without glancing at it.

"Your queen is killed," remarked Tchekalinsky quietly.

Herman trembled; looking down, he saw, not the ace he had selected, but the queen of spades. He could scarcely believe his eyes. It seemed impossible that he could have made such a mistake. As he stared at the card, it seemed to him that the queen winked one eye at him mockingly.

"The old woman!" he exclaimed involuntarily.

The croupier raked in the money while he looked on in stupid terror. When he left the table, all made way for him to pass. The cards were shuffled, and the gambling went on.

Herman became a lunatic. He was confined at the hospital at Oboukov, where he spoke to no one, but kept constantly murmuring in a monotonous tone: "The trey, seven, ace! The trey, seven, queen!"

"The Shot" is in a different vein, being a tale of singular dramatic intensity. There is a legend that it is largely biographical, Pushkin himself having coolly eaten cherries, as did the Count, while under fire in a duel.

A group of military men stationed in the dull little town of N—— welcome to their society the one eligible civilian, a certain Silvio, a taciturn man of thirty-five, who has retired from the Hussars. He lives meagrely in a small house, where he frequently entertains the officers with the best he has, which always includes plenty of champagne. The walls of this house are punctured with bullet-holes, for its occupant is a marvellous shot with the pistol. Regarding his past, he says practically nothing, but every one feels that some tragic event has stamped his career.

One day a newcomer among the officers quarrels with Silvio, and slaps his face. Much to the surprise and disappointment of all, Silvio does not challenge him, but accepts a lame explanation. It takes some time for Silvio to rehabilitate himself with his friends, but his good qualities at last accomplish this, except with one officer, who tells the story.

One day Silvio, all excitement, announces that a change has come in his affairs, and that he must leave N——. He packs his goods, and invites the officers to a final feast. At its close he asks the narrator to remain, and tells him this story, to explain why he avoided challenging his offender.

Some years before, while serving in the Hussars, Silvio was known as a great rake and an incorrigible duellist. His popularity waned, however, with the advent of a brilliant young Count, of whom he soon became jealous, and upon whom he fixed a quarrel. In the duel which followed, the Count won the first shot, and pierced his adversary's cap, but showed such nonchalance—having coolly eaten cherries while standing to receive Silvio's shot—that the latter decided to relinquish his chance until a later time. In all these years a favorable opportunity had not come in which to make the Count show fear, and that was why Silvio was not willing to risk his life by engaging in another duel, even though he knew he was a remarkable shot: he was holding himself for his revenge. And now his revenge had come, for he had just learned that the Count had married a beautiful young woman and was enjoying his honeymoon.

The narrator never sees Silvio again, but some time after the strange man has left N——, the narrator goes back to his own native village, and there meets Count and Countess B——. At their first meeting their visitor is interested by seeing two bullet-holes which have pierced a painting. It transpires that Count B—— is the very one with whom Silvio fought his duel. The Count then narrates the sequel.

Shortly after their marriage, the Count returned with his bride to his estates, where he was startled to find Silvio, claiming the right of the shot which was his due. The Count gallantly yielded to him and stood up in his drawing-room, but Silvio a second time declined to shoot, and proposed that they again draw for the first shot. The Count won, and shot over Silvio's head, making one of the two bullet-holes. At this juncture the Countess came in and flung herself at Silvio's feet. In shame, the Count made her rise, and Silvio prepared to take his shot, whereupon the Countess threw herself upon her husband's breast. As he saw Silvio point his weapon at them both, at last the Count showed fear, although not for himself. Being satisfied with this exhibition of fear, natural though it was, Silvio declined to shoot. As he left the room, he turned, however, and, almost without looking, took a parting

shot at the painting, which he penetrated with a bullet-hole precisely below that which had been made by the Count's bullet. And so this strange man passed out of their lives.

"The Snow-Storm" seems to me to be Pushkin's greatest short-story. It has a well-defined plot, a surprising dénouement, the action marches on to its climax, and both local color and characterization are of a high order. It is especially remarkable for its having been produced at the very opening of the decade which produced the modern short-story.

THE SNOW-STORM

TOWARDS the close of the year 1811, during that very memorable epoch, there lived in the village of Nenaradova the good Gavril Gavrilovich R—. He was famed throughout the district for his hospitality and good-nature; and his neighbors continually kept coming to his house to partake of food and drink, and to play the game of Boston at five copecks with his wife, Prascovia Petrovna. Others came, however, to inspect their daughter, Maria Gavrilovna, a graceful, pale, seventeen-year-old girl. She was considered a rich match, and many a visitor had had designs upon her for himself or for his son.

Maria Gavrilovna had been brought up on French novels, and consequently was in love. The object chosen by her for her love was a poor army lieutenant, who was now on a leave of absence in his native village. It goes without saying that the young man returned her passion. The parents of the girl, however, having noted the mutual inclinations of the pair, forbade their daughter even to think of him; while him they received even worse than if he were a dismissed petty official.

Our lovers exchanged notes, and saw each other every day, alone, in the pine wood or in the old chapel. There they vowed to each other eternal love, bewailed their fate, and formed all sorts of plans. Their discussions carried on in this way naturally brought them to the following conclusion: "If we can't exist without each other, and the will of stern parents stands in the way of our felicity, why should n't we manage without them?" Needless to say, this happy idea originated in the mind of the young man, and that it appealed strongly to the romantic imagination of Maria Gavrilovna.

Winter came on, and interrupted their meetings. This, however, only served to quicken the correspondence. Vladimir Nikolaevich, in every letter, entreated her to give herself to him, to wed secretly, to remain in concealment a while, and then to throw themselves at the feet of the parents, who, to be sure, would be touched finally by the heroic constancy and unhappiness of the lovers, and undoubtedly say to them, "Children, come to our arms!"

Maria Gavrilovna hesitated a long time; and several of the plans to run away she rejected. At last she consented. On the appointed day she was to do without supper and escape to her room on the plea of a headache. Her maid was in the plot. The two of them were to make their way into the garden by means of the back-stairs. Outside the garden a sledge would stand ready to take them straight to the church of Jadrino, a village five versts away, where Vladimir would await them.

On the eve of the decisive day Maria Gavrilovna hardly slept at all. She spent the night in packing some linens and dresses to take with her; and wrote a long letter to a sentimental girl friend, and another to her parents. She bade them farewell in the most touching terms, and excused her action on grounds of a terrible overruling passion, concluding by saying that she should consider it the most blessed moment of her life when she should be permitted to throw herself at the feet of her beloved parents. Having sealed both letters with a Toula seal, on which were engraved two flaming hearts, accompanied by an appropriate inscription, she threw herself on her bed just before daybreak, and dozed off.

Terrible dreams, however, kept crowding upon her and constantly awakened her. Now it seemed to her that the very moment she entered the sledge for her journey her father stopped her and with a most painful rapidity dragged her over the snow and cast her into a dark, bottomless abyss . . . and she flew about precipitately, with an indescribable oppression of the heart. Then she saw Vladimir lying on the grass, pale, bleeding. Dying, he entreated her in shrill voice to make haste to wed him. . . . Still other shapeless, incoherent visions continued to pass before her. In the end she arose, looking more pale than usual, with a real headache. Her father and her mother noticed her agitation; their gentle solicitude and their ceaseless inquiries, "What is the matter with you, Masha? Are you ill, Masha?" rent her heart. She tried to quiet them, to appear cheerful, but she could not.

The evening came. The thought that this was the last day she would spend in the midst of her family oppressed her. She scarcely could breathe. Secretly she was bidding each one a separate farewell, as well as all the objects which surrounded her. When the supper was announced her heart beat violently. In a trembling voice she said that she could not eat, and wished her father and her mother good-night. They kissed her and, according to their custom, also blessed her.

Once in her own room, she threw herself into the arm-chair and wept. Her maid tried to prevail upon her to be calm and to take courage. Everything was ready—in another half-hour Masha would leave forever her paternal home, her room, her quiet, girlish life. . . .

Outdoors, the snow was falling; the wind howled, the shutters rattled and shook; all seemed to her to assume the aspect of a warning, the sad presaging of disaster. Soon everything in the house grew quiet and sank into slumber.

Masha wrapped a shawl around her, put on a long, warm mantle, took into her hands her treasure-casket, and walked down the back-stairs. The maid followed her with two bundles. They entered the garden. The storm did not subside; the wind blew in their faces, as if it sought to stop the young culprit. With the greatest difficulty, they reached the end of the garden. On the road a sledge awaited them. The chilled horses would not stand still, and Vladimir's coachman was restlessly walking in front of them, trying to quiet them. He assisted the young lady and her maid into the sledge, and in disposing of the bundles and the casket, then seized the reins, and off the horses flew.

Having thus committed the maiden to the care of fate and the skill of Tereshka, the coachman, we will now return to our young lover.

The whole day long Vladimir spent in driving about. His first morning errand was to the priest at Jadrino—it was with the greatest difficulty that he prevailed upon him; he then journeyed to find witnesses from among the neighboring land-owners. The first to whom he appeared was the retired, forty-year-old cornet Dravin, who consented with alacrity. This adventure, he assured Vladimir, recalled to him his earlier days and his pranks in the Hussars. He persuaded Vladimir to remain for dinner, and assured him that there would be no trouble about the other two witnesses. Indeed, immediately after dinner there appeared Surveyor Schmidt, with mustaches and spurs, and the son of the chief of police, a youngster of sixteen years, who had only lately joined the Uhlans. Not only were they in sympathy with Vladimir's plans, but they even swore to lay down their lives for him. Vladimir embraced them joyously, and returned home to get everything ready.

It had already been dark for some time. He sent off the trusty Tereshka to Nenaradova with his *troika*, after giving him most exact instructions; while for himself he ordered a small sledge with a single horse. He left alone for Jadrino, where two hours hence Maria Gavrilovna was also due to arrive. The road was familiar to him; and altogether it meant a twenty-minute journey.

Hardly, however, had Vladimir reached the open field, than the wind rose; immediately it developed into a blinding snow-storm, so that he could not see anything. In a remarkably short time the road became hidden under the snow, while the surrounding landmarks were obliterated in the nebulous, yellowish haze through which flew about great white flakes of snow. The sky and the earth merged into one. Vladimir found himself in the field, and it was in vain that he tried to find the road again. The horse advanced at random, and now drove into a snowdrift and now fell into a hole—the sledge kept on upsetting. Vladimir made an effort not to lose the right direction. It seemed strange to him, however, that after a half-hour's driving he had not yet reached the Jadrino wood.

Another ten minutes passed—still no wood in sight. Vladimir drove

across a field which was intersected by deep ditches. The storm did not abate, the sky did not clear. The horse began to grow tired, and the perspiration rolled down his body in large drops, notwithstanding the fact that he was being half-buried in snow almost continually.

At last Vladimir concluded that he was not driving in the right direction. He stopped, tried to recall, to consider, and decided that he ought to take to the right; which he did. His horse made way slowly. He had been on the road more than an hour. Jadrino could not be very distant. On and on he drove his horse, but there seemed to be no end to the field—only snowdrifts and ditches. The sledge kept on upsetting, he kept on righting it. Time passed; Vladimir began to fret.

At last a dark shape seemed to loom up ahead. Vladimir jerked the reins in that direction. On closer approach, he saw it was a wood. "Thank God!" he thought, "now it is near." He kept going along the edge of the wood, hoping to strike the familiar road, or to make a detour of the forest. Jadrino, he knew, was situated somewhere behind it. He soon found the road, and drove into the darkness among the trees, which stood in their winter nakedness. The wind could not make much headway here; the road was smooth; the horse braced itself, and Vladimir regained confidence.

On and on he continued his journey—and still no Jadrino in sight; there was no end to the road. In consternation, Vladimir became aware that he had entered an unfamiliar forest. Despair seized hold of him. He lashed the horse; the poor animal went off at a canter, but soon slowed down, and after a quarter of an hour relapsed into a walk, despite all exertions on the part of the unhappy Vladimir.

Gradually the wood grew less dense, and Vladimir came out again into the open. No Jadrino in sight. It must have been about midnight. Tears gushed from his eyes; he drove about at random. The storm quieted down, the clouds dispersed; before him lay a valley, covered with a white, undulating carpet. The night was sufficiently clear. He discerned not far off a tiny village, consisting of some four or five houses. Vladimir drove towards it. At the very first cottage he sprang out of his sledge, ran to the window, and began to knock. In a few minutes the wooden shutter went up, and an old man stuck out his gray beard.

"What do you want?"

"Is Jadrino far from here?"

"Is Jadrino far from here!"

"Yes, yes, is it far?"

"Not far—ten versts or so!"

At this answer Vladimir caught hold of his hair and stood motionless, like one condemned to death.

"And where do you come from?" continued the old man.

Vladimir had no courage left to reply to the question.

"Can you, old man," he asked, "procure me horses to take me to Jadrino?"

"How should we have horses?" answered the peasant.

"Can you at least give me a guide? I will pay as much as he wants."

"Wait," said the old man, lowering the shutter. "I'll send my son out to you. He'll guide you."

Vladimir waited. A minute had not elapsed when he began knocking again. The shutter went up again, the same gray beard made its appearance.

"What do you want?"

"Well, where's your son?"

"He'll be out soon. He's putting on his boots. Are you cold? Step in and warm yourself."

"Thanks, send your son out quickly."

The gate creaked; a lad came out with a heavy stick in hand. He went in front, now indicating, now searching for, the road hidden under snow-drifts.

"What hour is it?" Vladimir asked him.

"It will soon be daylight," replied the young peasant.

Vladimir spoke not another word.

The cocks were crowing and it was already light when they reached Jadrino. The church was closed. Vladimir paid his guide and drove to the priest's house. His *troika* was not there. What news awaited him!

Let us return, however, to the good land-owners of Nenaradova and see what is passing there.

Nothing out of the way.

The old people had had their sleep and had gone to the dining-room—Gavrila Gavrilovich in his night-cap and flannel jacket, Prascovia Petrovna in her dressing-gown of wadding. The samovar was brought in, and Gavrila Gavrilovich sent the maid to ask Maria Gavrilovna about her health and how she had rested. The maid returned, announcing that the young lady had slept badly, but was feeling better now, and that presently she would be in to breakfast. Very shortly, in fact, the door opened, and Maria Gavrilovna came forward to greet her papa and mamma.

"How is your head, Masha?" asked Gavrila Gavrilovich.

"Better, Papa," replied Masha.

"Masha, you must have got a headache yesterday from the fumes of the heater," said Prascovia Petrovna.

"Perhaps so, Mamma," answered Masha.

The day passed happily, but by night Masha was taken ill. A doctor was sent for from town. He arrived towards evening and found the sick girl in delirium. She developed high fever, and for two weeks the poor girl was at death's door.

No one in the house knew what had happened. The letters written by her on the eve of her planned elopement were burned; her maid, fearing the wrath of her master, had said a word to no one. The priest, the retired cornet, the mustached surveyor, and the little Uhlan were quiet, and with good reason. Tereshka, the driver, never uttered a superfluous word, even when in drink. The secret was thus well kept by more than a half-dozen conspirators. Maria Gavrilovna herself gave away her secret while in delirium. Her words, however, were so incoherent that her mother, who never left her bedside, could only gather that her daughter was passionately in love with Vladimir Nikolaevich, and that this love was apparently the cause of her illness. She held counsel with her husband, and with some of the neighbors, and in the end they unanimously decided that there was no getting around fate, that poverty was no crime, that the man was the thing—not wealth, and so on. Such moral discourses are astonishingly useful in those instances when we are at a loss to find justification for our actions.

In the meantime, the young lady was returning to health. Vladimir had not been seen for a long time in the house of Gavrila Gavrilovich. He had been frightened away by the previous receptions accorded him. It was proposed to send for him and to announce to him his unawaited good fortune: the consent to marriage. Imagine the amazement of the proprietors of Nenaradova when in answer to their proposal they received from him a half-insane letter! He informed them that his foot would never be set in their house, and implored them to forget an unhappy man, for whom death alone remained as an alleviation. In the course of a few days it was learned that Vladimir had joined the army. This was in the year 1812.

For a long time they dared not tell this to the convalescent Masha. She never spoke about Vladimir. Several months having passed, she one day discovered his name among the distinguished and the dangerously wounded at the battle of Borodino, whereupon she fainted, and it was feared that high fever would recur. God be thanked, however, the fainting fit had no serious consequences.

Another sorrow visited her: Gavrila Gavrilovich died, leaving her heiress to all his estates. But her wealth did not comfort her; she free-heartedly shared the affliction of the poor Prascovia Petrovna, and vowed never to part with her. Together they left Nenaradova, the place of their sorrowful memories, and went to live on one of their estates.

Here also many suitors paid court to the lovely heiress; but she gave none the slightest hope. Her mother occasionally tried to persuade her to choose a mate; in answer, Maria Gavrilovna would only shake her head and grow thoughtful. Vladimir no longer existed; he had died in Moscow, on the eve of the entry of the French. His memory Masha held sacred; at least, she kept all that could remind her of him: there

were the books he had read, his drawings, his notes, and poems he had copied for her. The neighbors, who knew her story, wondered at her constancy, and with great curiosity awaited the hero who would in the end triumph over the melancholy fidelity of this virgin Artemis.

In the meantime, the war ended with glory. Our regiments were returning from alien soil. The nation greeted them with joy. The musicians played the victorious songs, "*Vive Henri-Quatre*," Tyrolese waltzes, the airs from "*Joconda*." Some of the officers who had entered upon the campaign mere lads were returning from the battles grown into manhood, decorated with crosses. The soldiers talked gaily among themselves, mingling constantly with their speech German and French words. It was a never-to-be-forgotten time! A time of glory and joy! How strongly beat the Russian heart at the word "fatherland"! How sweet were the tears at meeting again! How harmoniously did we combine the feeling of national pride with love for the Czar! And for him—what a moment!

Women—the Russian women—were in those days incomparable! Their usual coldness vanished. Their rapture was really intoxicating when, upon meeting the victors, they cried, "Hurrah!" And threw their caps into the air. . . .

Who from among the officers of that day does not confess that to the Russian women he owed his best, most valued reward? . . . During that brilliant time Maria Gavrilovna lived with her mother in the ——— Province, and did not see how both capitals celebrated the return of the troops. In the country districts and in the villages the general enthusiasm was perhaps even stronger. The appearance of an officer in such places was always the occasion of real triumph to him, and the lover in the frock coat had a hard time of it in his presence.

We have already stated that, notwithstanding her coldness, Maria Gavrilovna, as before, was surrounded by suitors. All of them, however, were compelled to step aside when there appeared one day in her castle the wounded Colonel of the Hussars, Bourmin, with the cross of St. George in his buttonhole, and with "an interesting pallor" on his face, to use the words of the young ladies of the place. He seemed to be about twenty-six years old. He arrived, on leave, at his estate, which neighbored upon that of Maria Gavrilovna. Maria showed him distinction. Before him her usual pensiveness vanished. It cannot be said that she played the coquette with him; but the poet, making note of her conduct, would have said:

Se amor non è, che dunche? . . .

Bourmin was indeed a most charming young man. He possessed precisely that sense which is pleasing to women—a sense of decorum and alertness, without pretensions; and an easy humor. His behavior towards

Maria Gavrilovna was simple and free; but, no matter what she said or did, his soul and his glances followed her. He seemed a quiet, unassuming sort of man, though rumor had it that he had been quite a rake in his day, which did not, however, injure him in the eyes of Maria Gavrilovna, who (like young ladies generally) was most willing to overlook little larks which indicated boldness and a spirited character.

But above all (more than his gentleness, more than his agreeable speech, more than his interesting pallor, more than his bandaged arm,) the silence of the young Hussar stirred her curiosity and imagination. She could not but feel conscious that she pleased him immensely; undoubtedly, he too, with his keenness of perception, and experience, had noted her preference for him; and she could not explain why she had not yet seen him at her feet and had not heard his declaration. What restrained him? Was it the timidity which is inseparable from true love, or pride, or the coquetry of a shrewd wooer? This was a riddle to her. Having reflected on the matter, she concluded that timidity was the sole reason; and this decided her to encourage him with greater attention, and, if the circumstances permitted it, even tenderness. She anticipated the most surprising dénouement; and with impatience awaited a romantic explanation. A secret, whatever its nature may be, is always oppressive to the feminine heart. Her aggressive tactics had the desired result; at least, Bourmin fell into such a pensive mood, and his dark eyes fixed themselves with such a fire upon Maria Gavrilovna, that the decisive moment seemed close at hand. The neighbors talked of the forthcoming marriage as of a thing settled, and the good Prascovia Petrovna rejoiced that her daughter had found at last a worthy mate.

The old mother was sitting one day in the drawing-room, playing patience, when Bourmin entered and immediately inquired after Maria Gavrilovna.

"She is in the garden," answered the old lady. "You go out to her, and I'll await you here."

Bourmin went into the garden, and the old lady crossed herself and thought, "The matter will be settled to-day."

At the pond, under a willow, Bourmin found Maria Gavrilovna, dressed in white, looking like a real heroine of a novel. After the first questions, Maria Gavrilovna purposely refrained from sustaining the conversation, intending in this manner to create a mutual embarrassment, from which it was possible to free oneself only by an instant and decisive explanation. That was, in fact, what happened. Bourmin, feeling the embarrassment of his position, said that he had long sought an opportunity to reveal his heart to her, and requested a moment's attention from her. Maria Gavrilovna closed the book and cast down her eyes as a sign of assent.

"I love you," said Bourmin. "I love you passionately." (Maria

Gavrilovna blushed and inclined her head even lower.) "I have behaved imprudently in yielding to the sweet pleasure of seeing and hearing you every day." (Maria Gavrilovna recalled the first letter of St. Preux.)* "It is too late now to resist my fate: the mere recollection of you, your lovely, incomparable image, shall be the torment and consolation of my life. It is still left to me, however, to execute a weighty responsibility, to reveal to you a terrible secret which will raise between us an insurmountable barrier."

"It has always existed," interrupted Maria Gavrilovna, in an excited manner. "I could never be your wife."

"I know," he answered quietly. "I know that you once loved; and that he died, and that you had mourned for three years. . . . My good, adorable Maria Gavrilovna! Please don't deprive me of my last consolation: the thought that you would have consented to make my happiness, if— Please, not a word—for God's sake, not a word! You torture me. Yes, I know it, that you would have been willing to become mine, but I—I am a most unhappy creature. . . . I am already married!"

Maria Gavrilovna looked at him in amazement.

"Yes, I am married," continued Bourmin; "and this is the fourth year of my marriage, and I don't know—who my wife is, where she is, or whether I shall ever see her."

"What are you saying?" exclaimed Maria Gavrilovna. "How strange! But continue—I also have something to tell—do me the kindness, continue!"

"In the beginning of the year 1812," resumed Bourmin, "I was making haste to rejoin my regiment at Wilna. Having arrived late one night at a station, I ordered horses to be harnessed immediately, when suddenly a terrible snow-storm broke out, and the station-master and the drivers advised me to wait. At first I agreed, but an incomprehensible restlessness took possession of me; it seemed to me as if some one were prodding me on. The storm, however, showed no signs of abatement. I could stand it no longer, ordered the horses to be harnessed, and proceeded on my journey in the very height of the storm. The driver took a notion into his head to drive along the river, which would shorten the journey by three versts. The banks were buried under snowdrifts; we drove past the place where we should have turned into the road, and so chance took us into strange parts. The storm did not quiet down. I saw a small light in the distance, and asked to be driven there. We arrived in a village; there was light in the wooden church. The church was open; within the outside enclosure stood several sledges; people could be seen walking about on the porch of the church. 'This way!

* In *La Nouvelle Heloise*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

This way!' cried a number of voices. I ordered my man to drive up closer. 'What made you so late, pray?' some one said to me. 'The bride has fainted; the priest does n't know what to do; we were just getting ready to go home. Come quickly!' Silently I sprang out of my sledge and entered the church, which was but dimly lighted by two or three candles. The girl was sitting on a bench in a dark corner of the church; another was rubbing her temples. 'Thank God,' said the latter, 'you have made up your mind to come! You have almost killed her!' The old priest approached me with the question, 'Shall we begin?' 'Begin, begin, Father,' I replied absently. The girl was raised on her feet. She seemed to me not at all bad-looking. . . . An incomprehensible, unforgivable heedlessness . . . I stood beside her before the pulpit; the priest made haste; three men and the maid supported the bride, and were giving her all their attention. We were married. 'Now kiss each other,' they said to us. My wife turned towards me her pale face. I made a movement to kiss her. . . . She cried out, 'Oh, it is not he, not he!' and fainted away. The witnesses directed on me their frightened eyes. I turned round and left the church without the slightest interference, threw myself into my sledge, and cried out, 'Let her go!'

"My God!" cried out Maria Gavrilovna. "And you don't know what became of your poor wife?"

"I don't know," answered Bourmin. "I even don't know the name of the village where I was married. I can't remember by what station I went. At that time I attached so little importance to my wicked lark, that, after leaving the church, I slept soundly and awakened only next morning, having reached by that time the third station. My servant, who was then with me, died in the campaign, so that I have n't the slightest hope of finding her upon whom I played such a horrible joke, and who now is so terribly avenged."

"My God! My God!" said Maria Gavrilovna, grasping his hand. "So, then, it was you! And you do not recognize me?"

Bourmin became pale . . . and threw himself at her feet. . . .



LINES FOR A SUN-DIAL

BY HARVEY M. WATTS

NOR cloud, nor dark of night,
I count as mine;
The shadows I invite
Mark but the hours that shine!



WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

AN IMPORTANT OPERATIC TREND

IN the last few months there have been many developments which serve to indicate the approach of an era of real comic opera, and this is something that should be hailed with great joy by a public to whom the insistent though forced vogue of musical comedy has at last shown evidence of reaching at least a temporary finish.

The success of "Robin Hood," which has attracted even larger audiences on its revival than when originally produced, and the remarkable success attending the Gilbert and Sullivan revivals, have naturally caused producing and house managers to regard with favor propositions that ten years ago they would have rejected.

Not only are we to have more De Koven operettas, more of the delightful Gilbert and Sullivan works, but it is significant that the amazing public response to these revivals all over the country has led Mr. De Koven and the Messrs. Shubert to create permanent stock opera-companies—one similar to that of the Bostonians of pleasant memory, the other similar to those of the McCaull and Aronson régimes at the Casino; and there are signs—unmistakable signs—that, as a result of the new conditions, the glories of the Casino are to be revived. But that is not all. Mr. De Koven, who enjoys the pleasantest relations with the gentlemen who own the Metropolitan Opera House and the New Theatre (now Century), has entered into an arrangement by which not only will light opera prevail at the last named establishment in the spring and summer of 1913, but the plans call for what in the opinion of the writer is the only

solution of the opera-in-the-vernacular problem: that of presenting, not native grand opera at Metropolitan Opera House prices, but rather the dear old melodious operettas which have scored in other days. These will now be reproduced with star casts, including some of the best known singers associated with the majestic opera house at Fortieth Street and Broadway. The *entente cordiale* existing between Mr. De Koven and the Metropolitan direction will also serve to remove the congestion at the latter institution.

In an interview with the writer, Mr. Hammerstein expressed himself as firm in the belief that such a chain of opera houses as this intrepid impresario has planned cannot be maintained solely through the presentation of distinctly grand operas. It was the great success of his own production of "The Chimes of Normandy" in London that convinced him that the greater public can be reached only through the less classical works, such as "The Tales of Hoffmann," "Martha," "Marriage of Figaro," etc.

And now what is to be? Are we to witness a return to the scores of Balfe-Wallace, Auber, and Flotow? Will America follow in the footsteps of all Latin Europe and demand a revival of Offenbach's "Belle Hélène," which, after lying dormant for nearly a quarter of a century, has been the musical sensation of 1912 abroad?

And if "Belle Hélène," why not "Barbe Bleu," "La Perichole," "Jolie Parfumeuse," and even "Grande Duchesse"? And if in the second decade of the twentieth century the Father of Opera Bouffe is glorified, who shall say that a lesser triumph awaits the manager who has the daring to tempt fate with the operettas of Millöcker, such as "The Black Hussar" and "The Beggar Student"? And if the Messrs. Shubert had the foresight to modernize "Die Fliegender Holländer," so that as "The Merry Countess" it has already survived all the musical comedy productions of the new season, why may not some other *entrepreneur* find a profitable occupation in doing the same thing with the same composer's "The Merry War," "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief," and "Queen Indigo," the last named being the first of Strauss's operettas and containing his best waltzes.

It is in the province of the managerial producer to watch the trend, and one must surely admit that for some strange reason or other the great American public has been deprived of a species of public entertainment that it has never rejected. Therefore, if the success of "Robin Hood" and "The Pirates of Penzance" means a return to the vast repertoire of similar works, it also means that only by such a policy on the part of our producing managers may we discover in this propitious musical era that vainly sought necessity, viz., another Gilbert and Sullivan.

ROBERT GRAU

P. S.

I SHOULD like to add a postscript to the timely little warning in LIPPINCOTT's not long ago, concerning the abuse of the telephone. Telephonitis is certainly a disease alarmingly on the increase, and one that calls for the same heroic measures demanded by appendicitis.

"Out with your appendix!" cries the surgeon. "Out with your telephone!" is the advice of one of the many who are called up, and one of the few who have chosen the better part of deliberately giving up a modern improvement for the sake of old-fashioned peace of mind.

I think perhaps the most unforgivable use to which the overworked telephone is subjected is as the transmitter of eleventh-hour invitations. The inviter has such an unfair advantage over the invitee. It is so easy to call a friend up and say, "Oh, Mamie dear, we are getting up a little impromptu Bridge-party to-night, and we are depending on you and Ned to join us." Of course when Mamie is held up in this way she cannot suddenly invent a plausible engagement that does n't exist. She wildly calls her husband to her rescue, but Ned's imagination is slow, and after a few ineffectual struggles poor Mamie throws up her hands, and the inevitable acceptance is pulled out like a tooth.

Better a loaded revolver at one's head, with the conventional alternative of your money or your life, than the telephone receiver loaded with an invitation, and the victim unarmed with a sharp and deadly refusal. All is fair in telephoning (which is apt to be a mingling of love and war), and to my suffering sisters I wish to extend—not a cure for telephonitis—I have already intimated that an operation is the only cure—but an alleviation.

Before I had my telephone cut out, I even planned having a little list of plausible excuses hanging close by the telephone, just next to "the numbers most frequently called." While receiving an invitation the sufferer's eye might travel up and down the little list, selecting the excuse best fitted to the emergency. Here are a few that might prove beneficial:

"Oh, I am *so* sorry, but John has brought home theatre tickets unexpectedly, so we can't accept."

"My dear, *what* a coincidence! We are having a very informal supper-party ourselves to-night, *so of course* we cannot come to yours!"

"Oh, how provoking! John has asked some tiresome old business friends of his to come and dine to-night just with us. What a nuisance!"

"I *wish* I could. But Aunt Sarah is coming to spend the day on Tuesday, and I *must* be here."

For extreme cases there should be a few antidotes and poisons, to be used sparingly. As, for example: "I'm dreadfully disappointed, but John has just come down with one of those awfully sudden attacks of grippe. An hour ago he was perfectly well—and I wish you could see him now!" (Fortunately she could n't.)

"I should have *loved* to come, but Baby is just getting a tooth, and I must be here when it comes through. He is so cross, I don't like to leave him."

"How good of you to think of us! But we really can't come, because John has just heard of the death of his cousin out west—oh, no, not a first cousin, but a *very* intimate one."

This little list is a mere word to the wise, and the wise are those who when attacked in unequal warfare make use of the nearest weapon for purposes of self-defense.

W. P.

THE DANCERS

THAT the goose hangs high and the dance goes on, seems to Folly all that really matters. For awhile she lives in a sunlit atmosphere, and pities the grubs who miss the joys of life. Suddenly the music stops. The Piper has come, and Folly cannot pay.

Than to think of the morrow, or "cut her garment according to her cloth," nothing seems more impossible to the modern woman; nor does she apparently even glimpse the futility alike of trying to befool this wise old world, or to stand off the Piper when his bill is due.

Everywhere False Pretense holds court. Young women, even as their elders, strain muscles and nerves to the danger line in order to equal or outshine those with whom they associate. The days of elegance, of leisure, of simplicity, are no more. Barbaric ideas prevail in dress. Homely homes have passed. Hospitality is a cramped delusion. Display is the fetich of the hour, and, as but few bank-accounts are exhaustless, Debt prowls wolf-like about many an over-ornate door. To spend is a craze; to pay, a nightmare. Than the "charged account," no indulgence granted to woman has caused more ructions in homes. It is the cue of the astute shopkeeper to allure the fickle fancy of the shopper. From all corners of the globe is garnered wondrous treasure intended for those who have money to burn on the pyre of senses. Sumptuous furs, wonderful jewels, priceless laces, hoary rugs, masterly pictures, and ceremonies of joy are everywhere. As she "shops," Folly, hypnotized by Covetousness, forgets the Piper, and rushes into extravagances that are to harass some man's mind for months to come.

If those who buy had first to earn, charge accounts would do no harm. It is the lust of the eyes that makes wives and daughters forget

to be honest; for is it an "honest deal" to make a too devoted father or husband "grind his bones," not to "make his bread," but to add ruffles of old rose-point to an ermine "dream"?

If the affluent, only, bought gorgeous wear, all were well. Such folk often refuse from principle to halo Caprice, or to act as shining examples for foolish imitation.

A good address is accounted unto Wisdom when one wishes to seem smart. A good address is one of the most costly luxuries. Nevertheless, to this fixed idea the costly home has been widely sacrificed. Rather a coop-like "apartment" in a fashionable neighborhood, than a roomy home where the nobodies dwell, is the modern decision and the abysmal folly.

Man pursueth (for greed) women who love things superfine. "On time" is the new lure. The instalment plan is yearly widening in scope. Through weekly or monthly payments, filched from the "market-money" often, luxury-mad women acquire things wholly out of proportion to their station. If scandal hisses, they wonder why—failing, poor bubble-chasers, to realize that no wife of a poor man can afford to dress richly, unless she has a private purse. If her bad taste continues, sooner or later will come a day of alarms, upon which she will see her own care-lined face in the mirror that never lies. To look well, to live well, and to be of some importance, is laudable. To do things that are worth while is contributory, but no one ever "arrived" in any sense through becoming an obvious copy of an authentic thing. The Real Thing is not always rich, but is convincing. It dresses well, because it wears the right thing always. It dominates; is not coerced by others. It lives where it can live best. It fears no Piper, because it pays as it goes. Thrice wisely, it buys only the suitable thing. Meanwhile, madly the Dance goes on. But after the lights go out the dizzy spenders remember the Piper. That such things need not be makes the matter all the more worthy of thought.

MINNA THOMAS ANTRIM

CAVIAR ON IMPULSE

"THERE is more simplicity," says Chesterton, "in the man who eats caviar on impulse than in the man who eats grape-nuts on principle"; and indeed no one of us doubts, probably, that to be impulsive is to be instinctive, and to be principled is to have characteristics laboriously acquired. And while caviar thus impulsively eaten may induce, indeed, a passing physical nightmare, the conscientious swallowing of grape-nuts is liable to bring about a settled melancholy.

It takes no thought to kick over the traces and do the thing pro-

scribed; it demands a weary lot of brain-labor forever to follow the cut and dried path; and more especially if the path be cut and dried by oneself. What may have been in the beginning a simple enough routine becomes at length a ceremonial all the more monstrous because, being self-imposed, it carries with it the dead weight of pride. "Look at me, Lord; I live the simple life," said the mediæval hermit, drawing his unclean rags about him and chewing ostentatiously upon a root left over from breakfast. Nor did it ever occur to him how much simpler it would have appeared to God, looking down, to see him working, playing, laughing, weeping, sinning, and rearing babes, in ordinary, comfortable human fashion.

On the other hand there is Horace, a respectable Roman citizen, paying his weary duty calls upon Mæcenas and other patrons and writing his weary duty odes to the Emperor and other personages. Horace is too simple a man to endure this eternally without relief. So, impulsively, when the occasion offers and he has received an editorial check, he invites his friends, buys a cask of Falernian, orders roses, piles logs upon his hearth with generous hand, and makes such a night of it as shall become a glorified memory to his doddering old age. Is he cold next day, with an empty wood-bin, or hungry, with an empty larder? What matter; was he not full last night? Were not his *socii comitesque* warmed with his hospitality? And those of the absolutely ordered life look on with envious eyes, for their hearts have no knowledge of eager, irregular beats. And while they are "shaken with the ague of their doubts," the cheerful eater of caviar-on-impulse pays the fiddler ungrudgingly and maintains a bright and stable faith in the outcome of events and the future of the world.

But it is not only in the primrose path of caviar that the impulsive man finds satisfaction for his impulses. Nay, in times of stress, in danger, in grave crises, he is quite as ready to jump into the breach, not being held back by any uneasy thoughts of a pill due at half-past eight or a sacred siesta rigidly scheduled for three o'clock. He is not even afraid to get his feet wet, irregular as that would be. No, he will plunge thoughtlessly in and save you a life or two, or a whole nation, and go back to his duties as unconcerned as though he had n't missed his dinner! And at the last call, when Death lays a hand upon his shoulder, he is not deterred by having drawn up a plan of eating and drinking, of lying down and rising up, of sleeping and waking, of dressing and undressing—and all by the tick of the clock—designed to carry him safely through to his ninetieth birthday. "Death, is it thou? Well met!" And off he goes, impulsively, with all his sins upon his head, leaving a gaping wound in the heart of every friend.

HELEN COALE CREW

THE INVESTOR AND THE GOLD SUPPLY

By Edward Sherwood Mead, Ph.D.

ARTICLE III.

EVERY one who discusses the price question takes it for granted that prices will continue to advance, borne up on a constantly rising money supply. As prices of commodities go up, the prices of bonds and all other forms of fixed interest investment will go down, the purchasing power of salaries, rents, etc., will decline, the assets of large investment institutions will be depleted, and the investing class, generally, will suffer severe losses. On the other hand, it is urged that the advance in prices of commodities will put up the prices of stocks and all forms of property, except loan or rental investments or annuities. The conclusion drawn from this prediction is that the investor should discriminate against bonds and in favor of stocks and real property.

If, however, it appears upon examination that there is no warrant for believing that the supply of gold will continue to increase as it has in the past; if from an examination of the facts we reach the conclusion that the gold supply will advance much less rapidly in the next two decades than it has in the past, it is safe to predict that prices will not go much higher.

Before taking up the question of the future supply of gold, let us look for a moment at the other side of the price ratio. A large part of the advance in commodity prices has been due to the pressure of population upon the means of sustenance. In 1890 thirty-six out of every hundred inhabitants of the United States lived in cities and towns of more than 2,500 inhabitants. In 1910 the percentage of city and town dwellers had increased to forty-six. The population of the cities during this twenty-year period rose from 22,700,000 to 46,600,000, while the population of the farms rose from 40,237,000 to 49,348,000. This is a gain of 20,000,000 people for the towns, and 9,000,000 for the farms. The consumptive demand for food-products, in other words, is increasing much more rapidly than the number of people available to produce the food.

An examination of the yield of our principal cereal crops confirms this conclusion. In 1889 there was a record corn crop in the United States, and the total production reached 2.1 billion bushels. By 1911 the production had risen only to 2.5 billion bushels. The yield per acre in 1889 was 27 bushels, and in 1911 about 24 bushels. The wheat-yield of the United States in 1889 was 490,000,000 bushels, and in 1911 621,000,000 bushels. The yield per acre was almost the same: 12.9 bushels in 1889 and 12.5 bushels in 1911.

The statistics of farm animals make even a more disastrous showing. In 1890 there were 57,648,000 cattle on American farms; in 1911 the number had increased only to 60,502,000, although the total population of the country during the same period had risen from 62,947,000 to 91,972,000. The showing in the number of hogs is but little better: 50,625,000 in 1890 and 65,620,000 in 1911. These few comparisons prove conclusively that one cause of the advance of prices has been the diminishing yield from the farms, at a time when the demand for food-stuffs was greatly increased by the growth in city population. It is unreasonable to suppose that this condition will be allowed long to continue. At the present time, farming is the most profitable American industry, and yet American farms, if cultivated with intelligence and with sufficient capital, could easily double their yield. It is a poor farm that cannot show 50 bushels of corn to the acre, and yet the average for the United States is less than 24 bushels. A yield of 20 bushels of wheat to the acre, with ordinary cultivation and care, is not excessive; the average yield for the United States is only 12. Yields of oats from 50 to 60 bushels to the acre are very commonly secured by intelligent and competent farmers; the average yield for the United States is only 24.4 bushels. The widespread agitation of this subject, the constantly rising prices of farm-lands, and the growing interest of all classes in the problem of the food-supply, is certain to result in a very great increase in the production of agricultural products during the next decade, and it is a reasonable presumption that farm-products will be lower as a result. While superior cultivation will increase the yield from farms already in cultivation, enormous areas of new land are being opened up. The completion of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway is certain to make large additions to the wheat supply. Every year the agricultural area of the Argentine is expanding, stimulated by the enormous profits to be gained from wheat-growing. Agriculture, the world over, is feeling the stimulus of high prices and immense profits; the natural consequence will be a continued increase in the supply of food-stuffs, and a fall in their prices.

Space does not permit an indication of the corresponding development in other lines of raw-material production. It is sufficient to point out that the production of coal, iron, wool, cotton, copper, and, indeed,

all of the materials of industry, is advancing rapidly, and that the tendency everywhere seems to be toward lower prices as a result.

What now of the gold supply? Are we warranted in believing that the supply of gold will continue to increase, and that its value will progressively decline? It is impossible, on the basis of an examination of the history of gold-production, to reach such a conclusion. On the contrary, the indications are abundant that gold-production for the next few years has nearly, if not quite, reached its maximum, and that the production will continue to decline. The force of this conclusion can, I think, be indicated in a few words. Gold has a fixed price—\$20.67 an ounce. The gold-miner is producing money. Out of his daily production he must pay his expenses. He buys labor, timber, drill steel, candles, lubricating oil, quicksilver, wood, sulphuric acid, salt, scrap-iron, and rope, in addition to large amounts of machinery. He also hires a variety of skilled labor, besides many unskilled workmen. The lower the prices of these materials and the lower the wages of labor, the larger will be the margin which remains out of his daily production of money. When prices fall and when labor is cheap and abundant, this margin is large; as a result, the gold miner makes large profits, investors are anxious to put their money in his business, prospectors are active in discovering new deposits, the annual production is extended to ores yielding in some cases less than \$3 a ton, and a large increase in the output of gold is the result. When prices are rising, however, the margin of the gold-miner's profit is reduced, the rising prices, resulting in profits to other industries, compel him to pay more for his labor, the investors' money is directed into other channels, the prospecting activities, no longer stimulated by lack of opportunity for employment on the one hand and by the glittering prizes of discovery on the other, slacken, the miner is forced to abandon the immense bodies of low-yield ore, and as a result production declines.

This movement is at present taking place in every gold-mining country. Those who are counting on an increase in the production of gold should examine the statistics of production in the United States. The principal gold-mining States are Alaska, California, Colorado, Montana, Nevada, South Dakota, and Utah. Of these seven States, only one shows any large increase in gold-production: the State of Nevada, due to the development of a few camps of extraordinary richness. The production in Alaska, which was \$18,000,000 in 1907, in 1911 was only \$16,000,000. Colorado in 1905 produced \$25,000,000 of gold; in 1911 only \$19,000,000. The production of Montana during the same period fell off from \$5,000,000 to a little more than \$3,000,000. South Dakota about held its own. The production of Utah seriously declined. The production of Nevada, during the same period, rose from \$5,000,000 to \$19,000,000, and the production for the United

States increased from \$88,000,000 to \$96,000,000, an increase almost entirely due to the phenomenal discoveries in a single State.

These figures show that the gold-mining industry, taking the Western country as a whole, is declining—the natural inference from the extraordinary prosperity in competing industries throughout this section. Even taking the figures for the entire world, there is no reason to anticipate a continuance of the rate of increase. In 1906 the total production of the world was \$402,000,000. Five years later it was \$455,000,000. These annual increases in production, it must be remembered, are added to a stock of gold which has now reached immense proportions, so that the percentage of increase is small. It must also be remembered that the demands for money are rapidly increasing, increasing indeed far more rapidly than a gain of ten or fifteen million dollars a year can satisfy. Take, for example, the national banks of the United States. In 1900 these banks held in specie \$373,000,000, nearly all of this being gold. In 1911, twelve years later, the specie holdings had increased to \$711,000,000, more than double.

Every time a new bank is organized—and the number is rapidly increasing—a certain amount of money must be withdrawn from circulation and put into that bank's reserve. This represents an increasing demand upon the world's money supply. What is going on in the United States is but typical of development in other countries. Canada and South America are rapidly enlarging their banking reserves. Immense amounts of gold will be sent to China to assist in the industrial development of that country. The final settlement of the Turkish problem will open the immense resources of the Balkan Peninsula to exploitation, and will require large amounts of money to carry on this new business. In every part of the world, in immense regions which until recent years were untouched by civilization, railroads are being constructed, mines opened, farms developed, and money—that is, gold—required.

In view of the small increases in the annual production of gold, and in view also of the certainty that the next decade will see large increases in the production of commodities and also in the demand for money, it is unreasonable to expect that prices will much longer continue to increase. The investor who has been discouraged by a decline in the prices of his fixed interest securities, and who has been tempted to sell them out at a sacrifice or to exchange them for bonds of less merit, will do well to remember that economic history always repeats itself; that there have been periods of rising prices in the past, and that these have always been followed by other periods when prices were declining and bonds increasing in value.